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Subject: Essay

Topic: "Education For All" Campaign in India: Myth or Reality

In nation building an educated person plays a very important role. It is the one who makes the society civilized and a pleasant place to live in. When India achieved its Independence in 1947 the number of educated people was very less and the country was in a need of such educated class people who could help in building the nation. The literacy rate was only 6-7% which has now risen to 74% according to the 2011 Census report. The reason for such a low literacy rate was the suppressive policy of the Britishers. They hardly took any effective measure to curb this situation. All they wanted was a class of English educated people who could be loyal to foreign rule.

Low literacy was not the only challenge in the campaign of "Education for All" in post Independence era. It was accompanied by very low literacy among the women. The growth rate among the women literacy was also very slow. The status of women can be regarded as the main cause for such a low growth rate. The Indian women were debarred from education and were mainly accustomed to household works. Changing the thinking of the people was the major obstacle in educating the girls. Another problem prevailed was a great divide among the people of the society. It was believed that only the upper section of society had the right to education. This led to a class of people who became backward with respect to others and found it difficult to compete with them. There was an urgent need for education in the country. And this responsibility was taken up by the government of India. It took many steps to promote education such as opening of new schools, universities and providing them with proper facilities. These steps would have remained ineffective if along with them the mentality or thinking of the people of the society would not have changed.

A campaign was launched in 2002 thus to provide proper shape to its ideas. It was called "Sarva Siksha Abhiyaan" (Education For All) with the aim to Universalize Elementary Education (UEE). Under the programme proper civic facilities were provided to schools. A school was made in reach of every child of every village of the country. Various programmes

such as ICDS, AAGANWADI, KGBVA (Kasturba Gandhi Ballika Vidya Abhiyaan) were started under this programme. It aimed at providing 5yrs of primary education by 2005 and 8yrs of schooling by 2010. This mission has been to a large extent successful in implementing its basic goal. Today majority of the children are able to go to school. Looking at the success of the mission and increased pressure on the secondary education the government in its eleventh five year plan started another programme called "Rastriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyaan" aimed at providing secondary education. Kendriya Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalayas were opened under this scheme. The 93rd Constitutional Amendment Act, better known as the Education Bill has now been enforced in India. Under the new Act, education has been made a fundamental right. It is now a cognizable offence to deprive a child of education - parents having to ensure that their child is at school. On the face of it, the Bill has made free and compulsory education available to all children between six and fourteen years…." an obligatory function of the State in such manner as the State may by law determine." From an Endeavour it has become a commitment. An additional clause inserted in article 51(A) exhorts parents or guardians to ensure appropriate opportunities for the education of their children.

Proponents of the Bill say it is a milestone, and enthusiastically spell out its very optimistic features. For the first time, it makes it constitutionally binding upon the Government to provide services for all children between six and fourteen, a task that it set out to achieve in the fifties but failed. It also sets out a conceptual framework within which this function of the State would be accomplished. Organizations that work at the grassroots however, say that it is a fallacy to call the Bill a milestone. It is not even a yard stone! The Bill's complete silence on the matter of minimum quality education has left the whole issue of excellence wide open to a range of interpretations, particularly in that it has pushed the onus of curriculum and classroom process management to the vagaries of the State. By doing this it has offered the states a clear escape route through the passage of low-grade education or cheap alternatives where quantity will be traded off for quality.

According to the Bill, the State is now no longer accountable to the society to build its social capital from the early childhood years, a period when brain pathways or synapses are said to be on their sharp upward growth curve. This omission, according to National Alliance For the Fundamental Right To Education (NAFRE), a federation of 2500 NGOs across the country, besides being at odds with the National Policy on Education is likely to add to the dropout pool. Moreover, stimulation of the young children is known to shape their interest in learning activities.

EFA in India: Myth and Reality

The official estimates of enrolments give reasonably sound reasons to believe that India will achieve the UEE as the exercises of enrolment projections and additional population needs to be enrolled are based on past trends and present status of elementary education in India. Also, it is interesting to note that in 1986-87 (NSSO 42nd Round), except for the age groups 0-5 and 6-11, the proportion of illiterates steadily goes on increasing with age. This also certainly indicates that there is an increasing trend over time in the children getting access for learning. However, if the Official estimates are corrected with respect to the children outside the prescribed age-group and the age-specific population is also corrected, there are enough indications to believe that the stipulated targets cannot be achieved by the turn of the present century.

It has been observed that multiple data collecting agencies found to have created problems for data users and educational planners. The Department of Education enrolment figures at Primary level have been found to be over-estimated by 1.22 million compared to Fifth Survey figures. In some states, the variation obtained is large and significant. Even the Age- specific enrolment ratios (Fifth Survey) at the Upper-primary level (Tripura and Karnataka) have been found to be more then hundred per cent.

It has been noticed that there was a significant difference between the age-group population used in computing enrolment ratio in Official and Census of India/Standing Committee estimates. The official estimate of age-population, especially in 6-11 age-groups, has been found to be under-estimated. By under-estimating the child population and thus reducing the denominator in calculating enrolment ratios, part of the educational progress in recent years is merely illusory, this has been done deliberately or inadvertently is a moot question. However, it is revealed that in the recent years, the discrepancy in population estimates have been reduced to a significant extent.

In a number of states, the GER at the Primary level has been found to be more than hundred per cent and it ranges between 146 per cent in Lakshadweep to 60 per cent in Chandigarh and states having small base population in a age-group are found to have high amount of over-age and under-age children. The Working Group (1989) and Eighth Five Year Plan document while estimating additional number of children needs to enrolled used 22 per cent and 15 per cent estimate of over-age and under-age children at all the levels of education as against found more than 30 per cent elsewhere.

When Official enrolment ratios are corrected on the basis of over-age and under-age children and the age-specific population, the difference obtained between Official and Corrected ratios has been found to be significant and alarming. As against the 95.30 per cent Official enrolment ratio at Primary level, the corrected ratio was only 73.30 per cent. The corrected enrolment ratio at the elementary level showed that it has increased from 48.00 per cent in 1980-81 to 65.00 per cent in

1991-92. On the other hand it has been revealed that at the Upper- primary level, the discrepancy noticed is negligible and insignificant.

Based on the actual progress of enrolment at different levels of education during 1989-90 to 1991-92, it has been observed that Eighth Plan targets for Primary, Upper-primary and elementary classes would have to be revised upward. The revised targets would be 2.25, 6.47 and 8.72 crore as against 2.02, 3.59 and 5.61 crore which are 11.39, 80.22 and 55.44 per cent higher than the previous targets, which needs more rigorous efforts in the plan period.

To achieve these additional targets during 1992-97, attention would have to be focused on educationally backward states and their districts, as all but two of the 100 and four of the 150 and nine of the 200, most backward districts are from the educationally backward states. It has also been revealed that except West Bengal which has no district in first 100 and only two in 200, the educationally backward states still uniformly lag behind. Also enrolment campaigns similar to total literacy campaigns at the grassroots level would have to be launched for which community support would have to be mobilized through Village Education Committees. It has been further revealed that the State and Union Territory level enrolment targets provided in the Eighth Plan document when added together did not match with the targets at the national level and the deviation found is significant, hence pro-rata adjustment is needed. Unless the children outside the education fold, especially those from educationally backward states are brought under the education fold, the dream of UEE cannot be realized. For out- of-school and dropped-out children, non-formal education system would have to be strengthened and all the educational programmes would have to be coordinated. Not only this, compulsory education through strict law enforcement would also have to be thought upon and also internal efficiency of education system would need to be improved to a significant extent by covering all the schools under Operation Blackboard and also by providing access to remaining uncovered habitations.

When Official estimates are corrected, there are enough indications to believe that the stipulated targets of UEE cannot be achieved by the turn of the present century. However it is interesting to note that except for the age groups 0-5 and 6-11 years, the proportion of illiterates steadily goes on increasing with age. This indicates certainly that there is an increasing trend over time in the children getting access for learning.

Recently, for the first time literacy rates have been calculated for population aged-7 and above but a large number of children in the age-group 0-5 years have been found to be literate and the percentage of literacy was 12.63 and 17.96 per cent respectively in rural and urban areas. Based on the exponential rate of growth of literacy (aged-7 and above), it is likely that India would attain 85 per cent literacy status some time near the year 2018 and 100 per cent by the year 2027. Kerala has already attained 85 per cent literacy status. Of the educationally backward states, only

Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal would be able to achieve the target by the year 2009, all other states would achieve 85 literacy status somewhere between the years 2031 to 2034. Thus the momentum and awareness which has been generated through total literacy campaigns in different districts would have to be sustained otherwise the neo-literate will very soon relapse into illiterates for which more facilities for continuing education would have to be provided.

What will the Bill do for the Girl child?

According to NAFRE activists a reality check indicates in a village, by the time children are six they are already engaged in some form of employment, with or without remuneration. Without dropping the lower cutoff age to zero instead of six, it would not be possible to lure a large number of children to school, leaving unaccomplished the umbrella objective of the policy which is to provide education to all.

Ending the educational obligations of the State at 16 years is being unfair to women and older kids. Says Sanjeev Kaura, the national convener of NAFRE, " When the UN convention defines a child below the age of 18 and when India is one of the signatories to the Convention, it cannot disregard the recommendations by fixing the upper-age limit at 16 years. Ideally, the Fundamental Right to Education should be from 0-18 years." One of the major sore points in the Bill say experts is the insertion of an additional clause that transfers responsibility of guaranteeing education to children on to parents and guardians. While there is no denying that parents need to be made conscious of the value of education for their children, it is often their economic conditions and lack of child care services in the communities that prevents them from sending their children to school. The 'poor-unfriendly' Bill is compounded by deficient classroom quality, teacher attitudes and the high rate of unemployment of the educated. All these factors blend with other reasons for parental disinterest in schools. With the State unable to guarantee employment to all its citizens, poverty levels continue to be high. It would be unrealistic for all parents to send their children to schools even though the awareness that education is as important as food and clothing has steadily grown amongst the lower income strata of society. Experts say this Bill also absolves the state from bearing the sole responsibility of providing education to children and can be an instrument for harassment and pressurizing the parents. The word 'free' that has been incorporated for the first time in any Bill relating to education is also misconstrued. Because currently free education implies only the waiver of school fees but parents have to bear the costs of all other expenses, which at times are higher than the school fees.

The budgetary allocation for education in our country is pitiable and is grossly insufficient for providing even basic facilities to children. The new Bill while making education mandatory for

children between the age group of six to 16 does not provide for any financial mechanism on how this will be accomplished. Without proper funds, experts fear that states will adopt cheap alternatives just to fulfill their constitutional obligation forgoing the real objective behind the passage of the bill.

Fund for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is an initiative to provide 8 years of quality education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The programme seeks to bridge gender and social gaps with active participation of the community. It also aims at mobilizing resources-human, financial and institutional-necessary for achieving the goal of Dr Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE).

Definitely, the objectives are laudable. But the real question is: Will the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy (under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resource Development) that has launched this ambitious programme be able to fulfill the objectives. Moreover, how is this programme different from the ones launched earlier to ensure universal elementary education, which has now been recognized as a Fundamental Right by the Constitution? The earlier literacy missions, launched with much fanfare, were exciting initially. People had started sending their children to school; women had looked upon literacy classes as a means of emancipation from age-old bondage; they had enjoyed sitting together every evening, learning, talking and interacting with one another. Yet there was a U-turn when it came to any follow-up action or reinforcing the learning process. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) had committed itself to following up the e literacy programmes with a post-literacy programme, leading to the setting up of continuing education centers in villages. Funds were sanctioned by the Central Government, but were not released for another two years. This led to lapse into the old non-literate days. Women and children could not sustain their fragile literacy skills. Even the much-tented 100 per cent literacy districts in Kerala and West Bengal could not keep up with the momentum of the literacy missions launched by the Government as well as several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). But delays in the release of funds, long gaps between different phases, overnight decisions to shut down programeness and con-fused priorities between the Centre and the states crippled the momentum that was generated. Another question coming to mind, is the Sarva shiksha Abhiyan really ‘universal”? A cursory reading of the document shows that the term ‘sarva’ is a misnomer as it refers only to children between 6 and 14 years. Adults, especially women, do not feature anywhere in the programme. The justification for the overarching focus on element ‘try education at the cost of adult education is captured in the supposed truisms like, “We need to shut the tap rather than keep napping the floor.”

According to-the Census 2011, the literacy rate in India is 65.38 per cent-75.85 per cent for males and 54.16 per cent for females, Kerala comes on the top with 90.92 per cent literacy. The State also occupies the premier position in both male literacy (94.20 per cent) and female literacy (87.86 per c mt), Kerala is followed by Mizoram (88.49 per cent) and Lakshadweep (87.52 per cent).Bihar with a literacy rate of 47.53 per cent ranks last preceded by Jharkhand (54.13 per cent) and Jammu and Kashmir (54.46 per cent) Bihar has also the lowest literacy rates both in case' of male literacy (60.32 per cent) and female literacy (33.57 per cent).

Despite several commissions and committees appointed to improve the state of education as well as several literacy programmes launched to bring the people closer to education, not much headway has been made in this direction, with the result that nearly half of the over one-billion population of this sub-continent is illiterate today. We have failed to realize that education plays significant role in the life of a nation and its importance in a country like India cannot be under-estimated. The character and quality of the people greatly depend on the education imparted to them at different levels. If we fail and flounder at the elementary level like the NLM and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, his generations to come will not forgive the political leadership. So this was an essay on Education.

Whether this Bill is publicity stunt or whether it will have the desired effect remains to be seen. Millions of children across the country meanwhile wait with anticipation to finally see the light of a new dawn in their lives. Apart from these only providing educations does no good. What if the people get educated and still have no work according to their capability. Thus, providing employment to the people also became very important. The rate of growth of employment in India has been around 2% right from the period of Independence. This is a remarkable figure in such a vast country like India. The development in the Service sector has opened up a new dimension in the employment opportunities. Even the contribution of women in this sector is relatively high with respect to other sectors of the economy. To tackle problem of unemployment, the government has taken many effective steps. Private sectors have also contributed a lot in generating employment within the country. Since 1991, after adopting the new economic policy multinational companies came to India which in return provided job opportunities to the Indians.

Simply imparting knowledge to the people is not the ultimate goal of education. Its emphasis is on making the person sound with its full development and making him a civilized person of the society. Educating him with all good deeds and evils, how he can work for the betterment of the society, country and human kind. This can be achieved by the proper guidance of an able Teacher.

In the hope to impart education to each and every citizens of the country we have achieved a great success. Today 74% of the people in the country are literate. If every person follows the policy of "Each One Teach One" then we can be definitely be able to achieve high education and have a well civilised and developed society. If we along with the government make some initiative the "Education For All" campaign can become a reality. It's just a few steps away.

Topic: How far has democracy in India delivered the goods?

Democracy in Lincoln's famous words is "Government of the people, for the people, by the people'. The rudiments of democracy are well-known. It is a form of government wherein every individual has a say. Democracy has come a long way since the classical times when Aristotle in his classification categorized it as a -perverted form of government. Rouseau's concept of General Will which had entrusted sovereign power to the masses paved the way for the French Revolution with its cry of liberty, equality and fraternity. It marked the turning point for the rise of modern democracy -ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people so that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of peoplee today we have indirect democracy where government is conducted by the representatives of the people, who are elected at regular intervals -

Have we ever given heed to the kind of democracy we have in India and under what conditions it had been established? Well, let's explore this. It is impossible to define Indian democracy as liberal, participatory or deliberative, because it is a blend all of these at the same time. It is not enough to only examine the formal presence of democracy but checking how effective are the institutions and procedures by relating them to the conditions that sustain them and reproduce them is equally important. So let's check and examine what conditions were present when democratic values and procedures were adopted.

According to Sameul Huntington, Indian democracy as an institution was facing few crises at the eve of independence. They were: crises of national integration, crises of identity, crises of participation, crises of penetration and crises of legitimacy. Thus we see the number of challenges, which the newly independent and decolonized India was facing while adopting the system of democracy. The major problems before India were linguistic problems, caste system (which further took a new form of economic class system), poverty and illiteracy. To add to them malnutrition and poor health conditions, poor housing, poor work capability, lack of occupational adaptability and an inadequate level of savings reflected the clear picture of India.

Many scholars compare the status of development and democracy, since independence. Does democracy leads to development or development leads to democracy? This dilemma still

remains. India had a firm nationalist base with the strong leadership of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru as the first Prime Minister. But during that time, the members of legislative assembly were elitist. The democracy was functioning smoothly but in their favor because the masses were illiterate. Congress at that time was working for indigenous bourgeoisie. Thus congress became a party of social status quo.

1967 was the turning point when the state parties suddenly came into power. This was a signal of democratization of Indian politics. Due to balance of payment problem, international financial institutions devalued rupee and India started drifting into economic crises. Mrs. Indira Gandhi swept the polls in 1971 elections with the 'eradicate poverty' slogans. In 1975 with the misuse of article 356 of Indian constitution, Mrs. Gandhi declared an emergency in India. Economic crises, formation of Bangladesh and Authoritarian rule at the center weakened Indian democracy. The decision-making roles and powers of the cabinet members and ministers were consequently dissolved and were taken over by Mrs. Gandhi. Though the Panchayati raj system was to democratize the country at the village level but the power was still concentrated at the top of the pyramid.

But after all the turbulent years in India, democracy still exists in its unique forms. Arguably it is the best form of government. Democracy would thus appear differently to different classes of India. To more privilege classes of society it would mean the freedom of enterprise and to the lower orders it would mean equality (at least between communities) and representation. But whatever the contradictions democracy may offers, Indian democracy will continue in spite of its paradoxical and surprising history.

It's noteworthy that despite everything, India has sustained a fairly stable democracy, while the countries with comparable (and in some cases much less serious) problems have abandoned democracy for authoritarian form of rule. There are many conflicting views on the success and failure of democracy and they all are associated to some ideals. For some an ideal democracy is a construct where people are truly equal citizens, politically engaged with an equal voice, tolerant of each other and where representatives are accountable. On the other hand, scholars have viewed democracy as an institution, which would mean free and fair elections, legislative assembly, and under this understanding India is considered as the largest democracy in the world. But any evaluation of democracy is of course, a combination of both.

Indian state has a deep commitment to democratic system and values as democracy provides impulse towards change and looks at contemporary struggles and movements of the people as a part of the democratic process.

Democracy centers certain rights on the people. But more often than not these rights are abused in the name of resisting oppression. Au unbalanced insistence on ones rights without a corresponding realization of one's duties creates indiscipline and disorder and, in reality, an erosion of the democratic principle.

Liberty and equality are both basic to democracy but are not these two concepts intrinsically opposed'? Can liberty, which allows a human being to develop his/her individuality, be reconciled to equality, which by its very nature puts a check on such individual aspirations for the welfare of a group. a community, a collectivity ? Democracy contains within it seeds of dissolution and decay as well as of life and progress. In truth, it calls for a balance between self-interest and consideration for others, between rights and duties and a successful democracy manifests a reconciliation of opposites.

India today proudly proclaims its position as one of the foremost democratic nations of the world. In terms of the size of the electorate, it is the largest democracy in the world. India, on gaining independence from colonial rule, had forthwith decided to adopt the parliamentary system of government of its erstwhile coloniser - Great Britain. The founding fathers of the Constitution, truly inspired by egalitarian zeal, had ensured universal adult franchise to citizens of the country, without any discrimination on the basis of caste, religion. sex, education or ownership of property. India had its first general elections in 1952 and the democratic processes have been vigorously functioning ever since. Belying all doubts and apprehensions on account of the large number of illiterate citizens in the country; the people have displayed an amazing political maturity and have ensured that democracy becomes a part of the social ethos of the country.

To express their dissatisfaction with the agendas and policies of a particular government or with the qualities of governance -in general, they have skilfully utilised their democratic privilege to oust the incumbent from power. Democratic processes have earned such credibility that there has not been a single instance of a coup d'etat or mass revolution to destabilise or overthrow the government. The regular, periodic elections have almost become a source of envy to other countries in South Asia whose experimentations with democracy are marred by interference from the army top brass as well as extremist religious leaders.

One of the biggest achievements of the Indian Constitution is the protection of democratic rights since its inception. The success and failure of a democracy can be judged by looking at its track record in the protection of 'right to freedom'. Any erosion of these rights can ultimately lead to the breakdown of the very Constitution of the country. We the citizens need to be vigilant against the assault to our rights. If we overlook these violations today, it will be a licence for the

unscrupulous and unethical elements to subvert our very democratic system. which we value greatly.

Such admirable achievements not with standing, India is often characterised by critics as a pseudo-democracy. The time is ripe enough to look back at the errors committed, to analyse the maladies that afflict the present day political system. In other words, what ails Indian democracy

The reasons are not far to seek. India had failed in its primary democratic responsibility of ensuring liberty and equality to the people. Fifty-six years since independence and still, every night, one third of the population goes to bed on an empty stomach. Thirty percent of the population lives below the poverty line, without au, means to meet their consumption requirements, without access to safe and clean drinking water, sanitation or proper health facilities. Governments have come and -,one, policies have been framed and supposedly implemented. crores of rupees have been spent, and yet India staggers into the New Millennium with millions of disadvantaged people to whom every day is nothing but a struggle for existence. Surely it is a grave sin to talk about democracy and voting rights to a person lying oil an empty stomach.

The right to freedom is the most fundamental of the Fundamental Rights in our Constitution. Without this right the moral and intellectual development of a citizen cannot be achieved. Articles 19 to 22 describe this vital right in the Constitution. which is the very backbone of the Fundamental Rights. Democracy is meaningful only when these rights are fulfilled.

Of late, our Fundamental Rights are under severe stress from certain elements in the state. In the name of ‘national interest’ and ‘protection of privileges this ‘essence of democracy is being crucified by vested interests.’

Equality has also taken a beating in a society totally raven by communal considerations. Casteism today is perhaps more rampant than it ever was. Untouchability remains abolished only in theory, with frequent newspaper reports of Dalits being denied entry to temples or other public places. Class conflict, too is on the rise with entire Dalit families being massacred by upper class landlords and the retaliatory violence that the Dalits indulge in to seek vengeance. The dreams of Gandhiji for an egalitarian casteless society lie shattered on the ground. It is the political parties, organized on caste lines that thrive on such societal tensions and rivalries and perpetuate the animosity between upper & lower castes to serve their vested interests.

The liberal, humanistic principles which can result in the establishment of a just and humane society have been subjected to criminal negligence. Indian democracy signifies nothing greater than party politics and elections. The very process of election has become suspect, marred as it is by allegations of rigging, booth capturing and bogus voting. A large number of police personnel

and paramilitary forces have to be deployed lust to ensure that legitimate voters get opportunity to exercise their right to vote. Serious distortions are visible in the. democratic process - a recent example being the Panchayat elections in one of the States where there were widespread allegations that candidates belonging to opposition parties bad been prevented even from filing their nomination papers - thus making a sham of all the rhetoric about democratic decentralization and grassroots participation of people in democratic process.

An unsatisfactory aspect of Indian democracy is the practice of defection from one party to another-ironically justified on the basis of "democratic" considerations of freedom of choice. The problem with Indian democracy is that it has been transplanted recently and has not "grown" from the roots. "Government by the people is not and never can be a reality; it is only a cry by which demagogues humbug us into voting for them" said George Bernard Shaw.

All of this is direct fallout of the criminalization of politics and the politicization of crime. The visionary giants who led the country to independence and secured its future through a democratic Constitution have all departed; the present day leader is a creature driven greed and the lust for power; he can resort to any measure to capture power and then retain it. His value system is warped, he is driven by narrow, selfish, parochial interest and he does not hesitate in flexing muscle power to eliminate his opponents. Multiparty democracy; so essential for a diverse country like India, has come more as a bane titan a boon. Parties have become the vehicle for the leaders and faithful to amass wealth and shield themselves from the law of land. National interest has been made subservient to parry cause: The motto is 'self before party. party before nation'. The Peoples Representation Act, 2002, passed in Parliament recently, exposes the shameless lengths to which politicians - of all hues and colours - can go to save their own skin.

A subversion of almost all democratic norms and values has led to a seething wave of intolerance and hatred, searing and destroying the bonds of love and harmony that had held the society together for ages. Violence assumes many forms - terrorism, insurgency, and communal tension, violence against women and through it all, the fabric of the society gets distorted beyond recognition. Intolerant, ignorant about the country's composite culture and heritage, devoid of any sense of history, people indulge in relentless, meaningless criticism of all things Indian and blindly imbibe whatever crumbs of Western culture come our way, courtesy globalization. Negative criticism is, however, not an attribute limited to the uncomprehending masses - the august body of the parliamentary opposition. forgoing all attempts at constructive criticism, utilizes every single opportunity to humiliate and embarrass the government. Quite literally, its function has been reduced to mere opposition.

The question that naturally arises is whether the form of British parliamentary democracy, which was to a large extent imposed upon the nation without making sure whether the people were

ready for it, is actually a suitable method of governance for a country like ours. The religious, ethnic, racial and caste diversities are deeply entrenched in the social ethos as well as the psyche of the people and they cannot be eradicated by just wishing them away. Doubtless, the needs of a country like our are vastly different from Britain, a small island nation with a largely homogeneous population.

The retrograde effect of Indian democracy has led a section of the educated masses to clamour for an end to democratic rule. Instead, they favour a brief stint of martial law and military dictatorship and justify their demand by arguing that such a step would help to restore discipline and confidence among the masses and reverse the process of degeneration that has set in. In fact, a lack of discipline and absence of national dedication was one of the six fatal mistakes which had brought the country to its present sorry state, as pointed out by the great jurist late Nana Palkhivala. But it would be fallacious to assume that respect for the rule of law can be enforced through a military govenment because such obedience based on fear of reprisals would be transitory. Love for the country is something that comes from within, through a proper appreciation of our unique social, cultural, historical legacy. No other political setup, except a democracy permits an individual to think freely and reach this level of realisation.

In India, we are fortunate enough to possess firmly established and functioning democratic institutions. Their weakness is their rigidity and inflexibility, their inability to adapt themselves to the changing times. Erosion of values has led to opacity of vision and this wrong can be set right only by that section of the population which constitutes its majority-the youth. No hurdle is formidable enough if people act to remove it. Action is important today, as the liberal educated intelligentsia turn their faces away in disgust from the murky world of politics and governance. People who plead helplessness in the face of rampant corruption are the very ones who sustain it by their silence acceptance of it. People who do not vote as a sign of protest are actually instrumental in perpetuating the lawlessness and anarchy around them.

Conclusion

Thus, it is thus clear that without a sense of discipline in all wakes of life, democracy is likely to turn into anarchy, chaos and disorder. If we wish to preserve democracy in India. we will have to practise restraint and discipline each citizen.

The onus is on the youth of the country-to create awareness, to sensitise the illiterate masses, to enable the downtrodden to ask for their rights, to teach them that rights are always accompanied by corresponding duties, to warn the politicians that we have borne the assault of the last straw on our back and will not tolerate any more. Democracy’s defects do not, however obscure its basic value. It guarantees freedom to the individual albeit that freedom is certainly restrained by

virtue of mast's living in a society. The freedom is certainly accompanied by certain responsibilities. self-defence and the difficulty of judicious choice but a democratic way of life alone comes nearest to satisfying. the love of freedom in man.

Democracy Today

Democracy has come a long way. It was an idea that developed over the years to be seen as it is today. There is still no specific 'form' of democracy. There are however some basic ideas that democracy embraces. All individuals have equal access to power, freedom and liberties.

Democracy has its origins in ancient Greece. However, ancient Rome contributed significantly to its evolution. In Athens, government offices and citizens were held by ordinary individuals and all male Athenians were allowed to vote. This right however did not extend to women and slaves. Also; the votes of the wealthy were given more weight. Hence a major element of democracy, universal suffrage was not exercised completely. Vaishali District in Bihar, India, was one of the first governments in the world to have elements of the present democratic system.

Democracy has many versions. Many anarchists believe that the true form of democracy is direct democracy, when majority decisions are not binding on the minority. This, they believe does not curb individual liberties. American representative democracy is said to have been influenced by the Iroquois society. This however is still being debated. Sortition is another tool of democracy where representatives are chosen randomly, without elections. The belief is that the population at large would be better represented through this process of random selection.

Today, the most common form of democracy is representative democracy where policy makers are elected by the people. The governing bodies however, have specifically defined powers and their rights do not extend over a well defined limit.

India is today recognized as the largest democracy in the world. One of the major reasons on the basis of which we are pressing for a permanent seat in the UN. But should we really pride ourselves on being democratic? Are we really a democracy in the true sense of the word? There are still factors to be proud of. The press plays an extremely large role in a democracy and ours is one of the most independent in the world. Democracy and suppression however, should be mutually exclusive. Yet, voices are still throttled.

An everyday example that can be taken is of gay rights. A topic which is debated incessantly. If we claim to be a democracy, how come a chunk of the society is still fighting for their rights? They are not fighting for concessions or quotas or representation, but for the basic right to exist as they are. With respect. And with grace. The basic rudiments of democracy like freedom of

expression and basic liberties to all come under scrutiny. Is democracy just a huge hypocritical circus?

At last it can be said that Democracy is not a definition or a meaning. It is a process. It has a goal. And we will achieve it. One day, differences will be celebrated and the dissimilar voices will ring out as a beautiful melody.

Topic: Judicial Activism and Indian Democracy

Democracy is a form of government where people surrender some of their rights to a small elite body who are elected by people to rule over themselves. This elite body or the public representatives make law for the betterment of people. Once elected the public representatives remain all powerful till the end of the term by constitutional provision or otherwise because the constitution does not provide "call back" power to the people. The assumed principle is that these public representatives should make laws for the benefit of the people. The loophole in our administration is that it is not very transparent and popular participation is bare minimum. The prescribed methods of control on government have been largely unsuccessful. So in such a situation a vacuum is created in governance i.e. who shall see the validity of a law.

The judiciary as such and by principle cannot act unless an aggrieved party does not knock its door. Hence this vacuum is substantial. As per the theory of "Power vacuum filling" some organ has to extend its influence and it is only natural for judiciary to extend its influence in the sphere. Many argue that it is against the principle of democracy. May be it is true. But there is a widening gap between the principle of democracy and the essence of democracy. Sometimes the hegemonic growth of the form and procedure of democracy become so vast that they make the spirit of democracy in danger. Now it is important to decide what is more important the procedure and principles of democracy like the legislative supremacy or the spirit of democracy i.e. welfare of people. The principle and procedure may be a means to an end but the end is always the spirit of democracy. So if means are abridged to attain the ends then democracy will be more successful than anything else. Judiciary under the veil of activism serves as a watch dog for preserving this basic spirit of democracy.

Meaning

Judicial activism, like many catchwords, has acquired so many different meanings as to obscure more than it reveals. But at the same time it cannot be discarded as an intellectual void for the vagueness of the definition of the word for at the heart it speaks about the survival of law.

Abandonment of this word not being a viable option, clarification needed as to what judicial activism is. Judicial activism is different from the judicial review or other process of jurisdiction in the sense that under the gamut of judicial review the judiciary can extend its influence to the spheres of executive and the legislative. Judicial activism simply means a pro-active judiciary which does no limit itself to the interpretation of law only but also sees if the law affects people adversely. The great contribution of judicial activism in India has been to provide a safety valve and a hope that justice is not beyond reach.

Our Constitution & Judiciary

When India's founding fathers wrote the Constitution, they created three arms — Parliament, Executive and the Judiciary — of the state that together were to be the keepers of the ideals of the nation as enshrined in the Constitution. Over the past several months, however, the Parliament has become dysfunctional, the Executive has abdicated its duties and the Judiciary is cracking the whip. Many think that it is cracking the whip a bit too much. I don't think so. An active judiciary is one that takes its task of defending the fundamental rights of the people and their liberties against the onslaught of the state, earnestly. As far as judges are concerned, it is a matter of mindset. One judge could say that policy formulation is the job of the Executive and Judiciary does not need to intervene while another could believe that even in policy formulation, the Judiciary would need to step in to guard fundamental rights. The occasion for this often arises when the Executive fails to discharge its statutory, constitutional obligations. As a result of this failure, the fundamental rights of the people are violated.

The Indian judiciary has been constitutionally vested with the power of review to keep the Executive and Legislature within constitutional boundaries. The Judiciary can strike down any law that is beyond Parliament's legislative competence or is violative of the Constitution. Similarly, it can strike down any Executive action, if there is any patent illegality or arbitrariness to it. A Supreme Court judgment becomes the law of the land. While Articles 13, 21, 32, 226 and 227 encompass this power, Article 142 hands a unique, extraordinary power to our Supreme Court to do 'complete justice' in any matter before it. This power has often been wielded unpredictably. It granted a divorce to a Hindu couple on the ground of irretrievable breakdown of marriage, even though no such ground exists under the Hindu Marriage Act.

To understand the concept of the judicial activism two theories have been expounded. The first theory "Power vacuum filling" theory says if in a system there is a vacuum because of the lack of any particular organ or the inaction of it, then other organs extend their influence to the vacuum created. Nature does not allow the vacuum to remain as such. In the government in certain areas

vacuum is created due to the lack of interest in executive or legislative or simply due to the inaction and indifference in their part. This vacuum is filled by a dynamic judiciary. This is called the judicial activism. The other theory of "social want" says that people want something which is neither provided by the executive or the legislative. So judiciary took it upon itself to provide the wants of the people. So it became proactive and this proactiveness is called as judicial activism.

The doctrine of separation of powers is embedded in our constitutional scheme. Explaining the need for separation of powers, Montesquieu wrote: "There is no liberty where judicial power is not separated from both legislative and executive power. If judicial and legislative powers are not separated, power over the life and liberty of citizens would be arbitrary, because the judge would also be a legislator. If it were not separated from executive power, the judge would have the strength of an oppressor…"

History

Ruler of England Stuart King James I on November 13, 1608, entered the royal courts and claimed that he could take any case he chose, remove it from the courts, and decide it in his royal person. Chief Justice Coke answered that he could not do so but the case ought to be determined and adjudged in a court of justice according to the law and custom of England. The King was greatly offended and replied: "This means that I shall be under law which is treason to affirm." Coke replied: "the King should not be under man but should be under God and law." Chief Justice Coke's reply was an affirmation of the judicial power while upholding the rule of law against arbitrary decisions of the sovereign. This was judicial activism at its finest. In 1801, Chief Justice John Marshall highlighted and reaffirmed the power of the American Supreme Court to invalidate Congressional statutes in the celebrated case of Marbury v. Madison. He avoided a direct conflict with the administration while highlighting and reaffirming the judicial review power to invalidate an Act of Congress. Chief Justice Earl Warren of the U.S. was one of the great activist judges who have profoundly influenced the Indian Supreme Court. By his decisions he legitimised affirmative action by the courts and removed racial discrimination in schools by desegregation, reapportioned obsolete electoral districts, and enhanced the rights of poor accused and defendants.

Indian Context

When one talks about the judicial activism in India the following Supreme Court judgments come to mind.

1. Golaknath Vs. the State of Punjab

In a land mark judgment Supreme Court made it clear that no constitutional amendments can be made on the part III of the constitution and there by fundamental rights cannot be abridged by the legislature. By this pronouncement the Supreme Court has retraced its own judgment in Shankari Prasad case and Sajjan Singh vs. state of Rajasthan case that the fundamental rights can be amended.

To remove the difficulties in the process the government in the 24<sup>th amendment amended article 368 empowering the legislature the power to amend the constitution.

2. Keshavananda Bharti Vs. the State of Kerala

In this landmark judgment Supreme Court first kicked the Hornet's nest in the name of the basic structure of constitution. In this case the Golaknath case was over ruled and parliament regained the power of amending but Supreme Court explicitly said that the legislature by virtue of the amending power cannot change the basic structure of the constitution. But what constitutes the basic structure was not specified. To remove the constitutional hurdles in an amendment the government inserted clause 4 and 5 in the article 368 which mentions that limited power of amendment is a basic structure of constitution.

3. Minnerva Mills vs. the Union of India and other States

In this case the supreme court over ruled that amending power is a basic structure of constitution. By this time the legislative and the judiciary in India were at loggerheads.

4. Sunil Batra vs. Delhi Government

In this case Supreme Court reinterpreted the writ of Habeas corpus as not only producing a person in the court but also preventing a person jailed from the inhuman treatment in the prison.

5. M. C. Meheta vs. the Sate of Tamil Nadu

In this case Supreme Court not only pronounced that deployment of children in hazardous factories is unlawful but also provided various guidelines for the children welfare.

Very recently the Union government has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court against its order in Ram Jethmalani's case by which it created a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the black money. It is for the first time that the court has taken over investigation by appointing a former judge of the Supreme Court as the chairman of the SIT and another former judge of the same court as the vice-chairman. The Union government had appointed a high level committee comprising revenue secretary; deputy governor, RBI; Directors, IB, CBI, (financial intelligence unit) and ED; chairman, CBDT and DGs, Narcotics Control Bureau and Revenue Intelligence. The Supreme Court added three more members to it-two former judges and Director, RAW-and rechristened it as SIT. Even now the investigation will be done by the police, but what is

unprecedented is that the SIT will report to a former judge. Under the Cr. Pc., the court cannot take over investigation though it can appoint any one to investigate impartially to its satisfaction.

In another case, Nandini Sundar- vs- Chhattisgarh, the apex court declared the appointment of special police officers (SPO) under the policy of arming of a civilian vigilante group, the Salwa Judum. In both these cases, the court has lambasted the neo-liberal economic policy of the government and held it responsible for the growth of black money and invidious inequality which has led to the menace of Naxalism. Both judgments are replete with condemnation of the state's "amoral" economic policies in florid language. The question is: Are judges competent to do it? Chief Justice of India S. H. Kapadia, while delivering the Motilal Setalvad Memorial Lecture, diagnosed the disease properly and cautioned his colleagues against breaching the doctrine of separation of powers: "We do not have the competence to make policy choices and run the administration…Under the doctrine of separation of powers, each of the above organs must stay within the powers allocated by the constitution." Justice Kapadia rightly raised the issue of accountability.

If one examines all the above cases it is pretty clear that judicial activism is against the legislative hegemony but the question may arise is it against democracy? Legislative is a democratic body. It gains the authority from the people. On the other hand judiciary has no popular mandate backing it. It is an independent authority. So by principle judiciary ratifying the legislature is against the principle of democracy. But arriving any such conclusion is not an easy task. There are many a loopholes in such straight forward criticism. Suppose the legislature makes the law which affects the liberty of people and which is a gross violation of human rights. In this case does the judiciary remain silent and follow the rule of law principle even if the law is inhumane? This is a question which has far reaching significance. There is no absolute solution for this. To analyze this one needs to reinterpret the word democracy itself.

In America, judges are chosen on ideological grounds by the presidents who are grilled by the Senate live on television. Thus, people know the ideological commitments of the person going to be appointed judge of the Supreme Court. Still, they tenaciously stick to the constitution. While in India, judges are apolitical and they have to interpret laws strictly within the mandate of the constitution. In the black money order, the court has clearly overstepped on the ground of protecting the fundamental right to equality (Article 14) and the right to life and personal liberty (Article 21). Law's hands are long and some kind of amorphous connection can always be established with these rights to justify judicial intervention.

Judicial activism earned a human face in India by liberalising access to justice and giving relief to disadvantaged groups and the have-nots under the leadership of Justices V.R. Krishna Iyer and P.N. Bhagwati. The courts on several occasions have issued directions in public interest litigation

(PIL) covering a wide spectrum such as road safety, pollution, illegal structures in VIP zones, monkey menace, dog menace, unpaid dues by former and serving legislators, nursery admissions, and admissions in institutions of higher learning. There is no doubt that sometimes these orders are triggered by righteous indignation and emotional responses. The common citizens have discovered that the administration has become so apathetic and non-performing and corruption and criminality so widespread that they have no recourse except to move the courts through PIL, enlarging the field for judicial intervention. If a citizen's child is attacked by a stray dog or cattle roam the streets or hospitals suffer from monkey menace and nothing is done, should not the court intervene?

Is Democracy Under Threat?

No, Given the above scenario, judicial activism may not be a derailing force provided it does not go into excess. In fact limited judicial activism may keep democratic evolution on proper track and ensure that chaos and excessive behavior does not develop. Independence is not over interference. Judicial activism can only be effective, it is sparsely used. Media needs to show maturity. Over hyping judicial activism is going to be counterproductive. Political parties need to show maturity and rather than branding the verdict as conspiracy against democracy, should avoid the collision course. The rise of judicial development can potentially lead to stable democracy provided the stakeholders show restrain and maturity.

The great contribution of judicial activism in India has been to provide a safety valve in a democracy and a hope that justice is not beyond reach. Judicial activism has come to stay in India and will prosper as long as the judiciary is respected and is not undermined by negative perceptions, which have overtaken the executive and the legislature. There is concern among the public about lack of transparency in judicial appointments and a sense of increasing unease because of a lack of a credible mechanism to deal with serious complaints against the higher judiciary. For instance, there are laws to prevent children from working in hazardous occupations. Now there are parents who willingly let their children work because of economic necessities. The factory owners fix the inspectors and the laws that are supposed to protect the children are not implemented. In such cases, a court hearing a complaint from a bonafide NGO can order the state to enforce the laws because by not implementing them it is violating the children's fundamental right to a healthy life. That is activism in the right sense.

Criticism

Many critics are of the opinion that the judges become proactive to come to limelight because they are devoid of limelight compared to the legislature and the executive. Thereis a great chance of PILs being misused. Anybody can file PILs for any petty reasons and thereby there will be

such huge volumes of litigations pending on the floor of court that it will one day become unwieldy.

The criticism that judges crave for limelight has little credibility. Because as such judges occupy a revered position in the society. However if ever any judge wants to be in lime light then there is not major sin because after all he is also a human being, so, there is no need to get this problem exaggerated. Regarding the abuse of PILs the apex court in several of its pronouncements has categorically mentioned about some guidelines regarding the PILs and their usages.

Conclusion

Judges should, however, be careful about one thing. Judicial activism should not become judicial adventurism. They should not get into areas in which they do not have any expertise. The court, for instance, can order the government to prepare a welfare scheme, but not undertake the task of framing it itself. And in PILs, the Judiciary should refrain from the temptation of getting media headlines. India cannot afford to let the Judiciary to fail as it is the only ray of hope and protection to the common man against arbitrary actions of the Executive. The great contribution of judicial activism in India has been to provide a safety valve in a democracy and a hope that justice is not beyond reach. The doctrine of separation of powers is embedded in our constitutional scheme, and the soul of our constitution should be kept intact.

Topic: Water Resources Should Be Under the Control of the Central Government

Every State has Dispute in sharing water resources with its Neighbouring state. Then and there problems arising between Peoples of two states. They are not allowing neighboring state Vehicles to enter into their state. Some parts of India are flooded with Rain, they don’t have place to live till the flooded rain water gets drained, in some other parts people are longing to get water for irrigation and their basic needs. We can stop all these if we nationalize all water resources in India. But this is still under consideration from Government side, but no steps have been taken to implement this. Putting water on the Concurrent List is not necessarily an act of centralization, though it could lead to such a development. That danger is real and needs to be avoided.

The Union Ministry of Water Resources has for long been arguing for a shift of water to the Concurrent List without any serious expectation of its happening, but has now begun to pursue the idea more actively. The Ashok Chawla committee, which was primarily concerned with the question of rationalizing the allocation of natural resources with a view to reducing the scope for corruption, was reported by the media to have recommended inter alia the shifting of water to the Concurrent List. There seems to be no such specific recommendation in the draft of the

Committee's report that one has seen, but the possibility is referred to in the text and there is an Annexe on the subject. These developments have revived the old debate. However the problems in implementing this I think are,

- At present Water Resources in India are under the control of respective state government, to nationalize all water resources all state governments must accept it.
- Detailed well planned architecture has to be prepared to connect all rivers without any city gets affected.
- Lakhs and lakhs of Acres of Land will be needed to connect all rivers; this must be taken care by the respective state government.

Nationalization of water resources has both merits and demerits. Though it is a sensitive issue to be handled, considerations from different state governments are to be looked before doing any proceedings in this aspect. As different water resources cater different kinds of needs, it is to be clearly understood what type of resources are to be nationalized.

Merits are:

- Nationalization can improve gross usage of water resources there by decreasing wastage
- It creates employment to several people directly or indirectly
- Future scope of utility of these can be estimated and implemented

Demerits are:

- Political issues may concern the implementation of developmental activities
- Corruption may go high
- Inefficient monitoring leads to increased wastes of water resources

Should water be moved to Concurrent List?

Let us first be clear about the present constitutional position in relation to water. The general impression is that in India water is a State subject, but the position is not quite so simple. The primary entry in the Constitution relating to water is indeed Entry 17 in the State List, but it is explicitly made subject to the provisions of Entry 56 in the Union List which enables the Union to deal with inter-State rivers if Parliament legislates for the purpose. This means that if Parliament considers it "expedient in the public interest" that the "regulation and development" of an inter-State river, say the Ganga or Yamuna or Narmada, should be "under the control of the Union", it can enact a law to that effect, and that law will give the Union legislative (and therefore executive) powers over that river. That enabling provision has not been used by

Parliament. No law has been passed bringing any river under the control of the Union. Under Entry 56, Parliament did enact the River Boards Act 1956 providing for the establishment of River Boards for inter-State rivers, but no such board has been established under the Act. That Act is virtually a dead letter. The reasons are political, i.e., strong resistance by State governments to any enhancement of the role of the Central government.

Is the present constitutional division of legislative power relating to water between the Union and the States satisfactory? The Centre does not think so. None of the Commissions that has gone into the subject so far has recommended a change, largely because it seemed unrealistic. (The Sarkaria Commission thought that a change was unnecessary.)

First, a move to put water into the Concurrent List at this stage will be generally regarded as a retrograde step that runs counter to the general trend towards decentralisation and enhanced federalism, and it will face serious political difficulty because there will be stout opposition from the States. Secondly, an entry in the Concurrent List will mean that both the Centre and the States can legislate on water, but the Centre can already do so in respect of inter-State rivers under Entry 56 but has not used that power. It seemed sensible to use that enabling provision, and also re-activate the River Boards Act, rather than pursue the difficult idea of a constitutional amendment to bring water on to the Concurrent List.

It will be seen that the above arguments against pursuing the idea of moving water to the Concurrent List are practical ones: the political difficulty of doing so, and the fact that the Centre can do certain things even without such a shift. That does not amount to a statement that there is no case for the shift. Let us ignore political and practical considerations, and ask: if the Constitution were being drafted for the first time now, where would one put water? The obvious and incontrovertible answer is: in the Concurrent List. There are several reasons for saying so.

First, it appears that to the Constitution-makers ‘water’ meant essentially river waters and irrigation. This is quite evident from the wording of the entries. In that context, it might have appeared appropriate to assign the primary role to the States, and provide a specific role for the Centre in relation to inter-State rivers. However, even from that limited perspective, a primary rather than a secondary or exceptional role for the Centre might well have been warranted: most of our important rivers are in fact inter-State, and inter-State (or inter-provincial) river water disputes were an old and vexed problem even at the time of drafting the Constitution.

Secondly, that limited perspective is in fact inadequate. Water as a subject is larger than rivers; ponds and lakes, springs, groundwater aquifers, glaciers, soil and atmospheric moisture, wetlands, and so on, are all forms of water and constitute a hydrological unity; and there is more to water than irrigation. If the environmental, ecological, social/human, and rights concerns

relating to water had been as sharply present to the makers of the Constitution as they are to us, it seems very probable that the entries in the Constitution would have been different. (Incidentally, there are serious concerns now relating to groundwater — rapid depletion of aquifers in many parts of the country, the emergence of arsenic and fluoride in many States, etc. — and it is interesting that there is no explicit reference to groundwater or aquifers in the Constitution.)

Thirdly, the Constitution-makers could not have anticipated the sense of water scarcity and crisis that now looms large. It is clear that while action will be called for at the State and local levels, the perception of a crisis casts a great responsibility on the Centre: national initiatives will definitely be called for. Fourthly, a new factor not foreseen even a few decades ago is climate change and its impact on water resources. This is a subject which is still under study and research, but it is clear that coordinated action will be called for not only at the national level but also at the regional and international levels. The Central government has necessarily to play a lead role in this regard. The theoretical case for water being in the Concurrent List is thus unassailable. Of all the subjects that are or ought to be in the Concurrent List, water ranks higher than any other. The practical and political difficulties of shifting it there remain, but these would need to be overcome.

However, if those difficulties prove insuperable, then we have to settle for the second best course (a modest one) of greater use by the Centre of the legislative powers relating to inter-State rivers provided for in Entry 56 in the Union List, and re-activation of the dormant River Boards Act 1956. It would further have to be supplemented by recourse to the wide-ranging provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 (EPA). It is of course possible for Parliament to legislate on a State subject if a certain number of State assemblies pass resolutions to that effect: that was the route followed in the case of the Water (Control and Prevention of Pollution) Act 1974. At present, the EPA is being extensively used by the Centre for water-related action. For instance, the Central Groundwater Authority was set up in 1998 by a notification under the EPA. More recently, when it was considered necessary to set up a National Ganga River Basin Authority this was done under the EPA, instead of following the right but difficult course of enacting legislation under Entry 56. Finally, putting water into the Concurrent List is not necessarily an act of centralization, though it could lead to such a development. That danger is real and needs to be avoided. Legislation and executive action must continue to be undertaken at the appropriate level (Central, State or local) in each case. The subsidiarity principle, i.e., the principle that decisions must be taken at the lowest appropriate level, will continue to be valid.

Interstate River Water Disputes of Central Government

In India, during the British rule, the interstate river water disputes were settled by the central government because the irrigation projects were virtually under the control of the Central Govern ment.

The Republic of India upon adopting a Consti tution made irrigation a state subject. Accordingly state governments, at present virtually exercise full control on planning, development, regulation, distribution and control of water flowing through their territories. Under Article 262 of the Constitution the Parliament is empowered to provide for the adjudi cation or control of the water of any interstate river. Under the Voter Dispute Act, 1956 a tribunal consisting of three sitting judges of the Supreme Court or High Court has to be constituted by the central government for the settlement of an interstate water dispute when a request is received from a state government.

According to the Interstate Water Dispute Act, 1968 the Central Government has also been given the responsibility of regulation and de velopment of interstate rivers and river valleys to the extent to which such regulation and development under the control of the Union is declared by the Parliament by law to be expedient in the public interest.

The Parliament has also enacted the River Board Act, 1956 which authorizes the central gov ernment to constitute river boards in consultation with the state governments for regulation and development of interstate rivers. The Government of India formed rules on June 30, 1959, to settle inter state water disputes.

Among the important interstate water disputes mention may be made of the Kaveri Water dispute between Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu; the Krishna water dispute between Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh; the Tungbhadra river water dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka; the Parambikulam, Aliyar and Bhivani river water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Kerala; the Godavari river water dispute between Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa; the Narmada river water dispute between Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan; the Mahi river water dispute between Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh; the Ravi and Beas river water dispute between Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir; the Yamuna river water dispute between Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi; the Karmanasa river water dispute between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; and the Barak river water dispute between Assam and Manipur.

Many of these interstate water disputes have been settled on the basis of equitable apportionment which is the universally accepted principle (Sukhwal, 1987, pp. 56-76). But still there are some interstate water disputes whose final solution, acceptable to all parties, has not yet been worked out. The Kaveri river water dispute belongs to same categories which besides embittering the

relations between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have even threatened the stability of the Central Government.

In a developing country like India, the interstate river water dispute must be resolved quickly so that water resources could be utilized and harnessed properly for economic development. One of the measures could be to declare all the major rivers as national property and national schemes under the central assistance should he launched for the development of their total command area with partial involvement of the concerned states. Separate corporations on the line of the Damodar Valley Corpo ration may be useful in this direction. Thus I feel that Water resources should be nationalized.

If the Government nationalizes them, the government thinks of the need of the water in each state. Government supplies the water to each and every state as the demand of the water. Some stages have huge amount of water in there reservoirs and some don't have a single drop. Water is essential for everyone. If government takes the responsibilities then all the land comes under cultivation and it will increases the productivity of the land and there by decrease the importing of goods from other countries and increase the number quality and quantity of the goods exported to the other countries by which it will increase the Indian economy. We are still a developing country we should use each and every path to make India a completely developed country. By making the rivers nationalized the land becomes fertile and can be used for cultivation there are by the Indian labors can get some work, some food, and even Indian goods quality can also be increased.

Topic: How should a civil servant conduct himself?

Civil Service is the backbone of the administrative system - the most glamorous position in the society, with power, prestige and authority, is the dream of every man, no matter, rich or poor, learned or novice. Herman Finer has defined the term 'Civil Service' as a "Professional body of officials, permanent, paid and skilled". A 'Civil Servant' is the servant of the 'civilians' and the upholder of the 'civilization'. He, who translates the law into action for the smooth functioning of the administrative system, is bound to the society and ought to live as the watchdog in the society.

"The perfect bureaucrat everywhere is the man who manages to make all decisions on his own and escape all responsibility." This defines the Civil Servants of today who try to be the perfect bureaucrats. They decide as per their own and politicians interests and forget about the needs of the people in a country like India where we speak of Populous Sovereignty. And the most beautiful part of it is that they are not responsible for their actions. It is Authority without any kind of responsibility. This has been very clearly demonstrated in past by our eminent

administrative thinkers authority without responsibility is of no use. The sword with the civil servants is their power. Their power is so effective that it sometimes overshadows the goals, idealism and political fervor of politicians. For one thing ministers keep on changing; it is the civil servants that provide the permanent machinery for running the government.

Thorough knowledge of his responsibilities, rights and duties, awareness of the current affairs in the society, free, independent, unbiased and impartial thinking, quick and sharp decision making skill, readiness and courage to implement the decisions, prompt and right actions, dedication and sincerity to the work, a sense of responsibility towards the society which nurtured him and to the one he is serving, compassion towards the poor and the weak and vision and innovation to bring light to the society and improvise the conditions are the basic qualities for a civil servant, to name a few! Does this mean that a civil servant has to be a 'Super Human'? He has to be a 'Real Human'! There are some wrong notions about the career as some might have thoughts as "my aim was to become an IAS officer; I have become an IAS as I admire the power and authority and for my parents' social status and not to serve the society; I have accomplished the dreams and now my work is over.' It is a misconception, the work is not over; it has not started yet! The 'Civil Service' is a 'Position' and not a 'Qualification'. Many misunderstand or rather do not distinguish between these two important words when it comes to the civil services scenario. For getting a qualification (for e.g. a degree), we strive hard putting all efforts in learning much and more as one can, to be the topper. Once we get a degree, the work associated with it ends and we do not have any responsibilities or duties to be discharged related to it. Here knowledge matters. The case is different when it comes to a 'Position', which can be considered as a superset of qualification. We attain a position by the same means as we get a qualification but here wisdom matters. Once we get to a position we have many associated responsibilities and duties to be discharged.

A Civil Servant is an Artist! An artist has to have a clear picture of his piece of art, his work should have a message which can be conveyed to the buyer or the admirer, he has to procure the fund and the resources to turn his imagination into reality, work on his project till it gets the finishing touches; mistakes, drops and failures are unavoidable or inevitable in any project which have to be managed appropriately; the way solution is sorted reveals the real talent as mentioned in the Best-seller "Wings Of Fire" by APJ Abdul Kalam, the master mind in Indian Rocketry. Similarly, for a civil servant, he has to implement the ideas that are beneficial to a better lot of the society and proves as a sign for social development. A mere piece of work, simply spending the funds to make a mark in the history or a stone to rise to the level of a metro or a developed

city is a waste of time and money! He has to recognize between what is ‘wanted’ and what is ‘needed’!

As versed’ If you want to leave your footprints On the Sands of time Do not drag your feet.’

The administration is active 24x7. There is no time to stand, wait and watch, unless the situation is so crucial that an immediate act can cause failure. Once the three ‘M’s as mentioned in economics (Man, Money and Machine) are ready, there should not be an excuse from the Authority to act, they should not be falling into the clutches of politics or influential people to wait till the time is reached when those powers feel that it is the favorable time for them. Civil servant has to keep up his Personality, which includes both intellect and appearance. He has to carry himself in Formal attire which commands respect at the first sight itself. A well-groomed, trimmed and pleasant appearance adds as a plus point to building a good personality.

The former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi often criticized public administration for acting as a stumbling block in the way of country’s social and economic progress. Officials understandably obey and help pliant ministers. They make things hot for those who overrule them and issue orders contrary to what civil servants think as the correct line of action that is the line that tradition, redtapism and rule book dictates. The rigidity associated with the government is in reality imparted by the civil servants who are well entrenched in their posts. Looking in to such a behavior and conduct, it is the high time that there should be a change in their conduct. Formalities have always had its place from the past at all places and in all cultures around the world. Clinging to formalities at all levels, social or career level, adherence to professional ethics and free interaction with the people who approach, can take him personally and professionally to greater heights with appreciation of all around him. Knowledge without wisdom is of no use. Patience is the sign of wisdom.

He has to wait for the right time to take actions and has to keep in mind ‘Haste is waste’. Some occasions may arise when finding a solution for a problem can take time from the ‘Civil Servants’ side; society and media may withdraw their support. But he has to face them with all his courage and, make them understand his views and build confidence in them which tells them that though he takes time for a decision, it will be a right one and towards the right path. He has to be a strong Leader!

With India developing so dramatically and coming as an international centre for commerce and trade and many other fields the representatives of government need to be really careful of their actions. They should act as real servants to the people of India. They should take in to account the need of people of India and their make decisions. Civil service should consist of people who think and see that things which are necessary for progress are implemented properly. The Civil

servants should remember that the reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour.

So it can be said that a two-way interaction between the civil servant and the society builds a strong bond between the two. Civil servant is the one who can build the society and in turn the state and the country. He has to make a difference in his area of action. He has to be in a continuous journey of enriching his qualities to mould himself into the true meaning of 'being a Civil Servant'. Let us hope for a strong administrative body which aims for the betterment of the society and create a peaceful and happy life for its residents!

Topic: How should a civil servant conduct himself?

Civil Service is the backbone of the administrative system - the most glamorous position in the society, with power, prestige and authority, is the dream of every man, no matter, rich or poor, learned or novice. Herman Finer has defined the term 'Civil Service' as a "Professional body of officials, permanent, paid and skilled". A 'Civil Servant' is the servant of the 'civilians' and the upholder of the 'civilization'. He, who translates the law into action for the smooth functioning of the administrative system, is bound to the society and ought to live as the watchdog in the society.

"The perfect bureaucrat everywhere is the man who manages to make all decisions on his own and escape all responsibility." This defines the Civil Servants of today who try to be the perfect bureaucrats. They decide as per their own and politicians interests and forget about the needs of the people in a country like India where we speak of Populous Sovereignty. And the most beautiful part of it is that they are not responsible for their actions. It is Authority without any kind of responsibility. This has been very clearly demonstrated in past by our eminent administrative thinkers authority without responsibility is of no use. The sword with the civil servants is their power. Their power is so effective that it sometimes overshadows the goals, idealism and political fervor of politicians. For one thing ministers keep on changing; it is the civil servants that provide the permanent machinery for running the government.

Thorough knowledge of his responsibilities, rights and duties, awareness of the current affairs in the society, free, independent, unbiased and impartial thinking, quick and sharp decision making skill, readiness and courage to implement the decisions, prompt and right actions, dedication and sincerity to the work, a sense of responsibility towards the society which nurtured him and to the one he is serving, compassion towards the poor and the weak and vision and innovation to bring light to the society and improvise the conditions are the basic qualities for a civil servant, to name a few! Does this mean that a civil servant has to be a 'Super Human'? He has to be a 'Real Human'! There are some wrong notions about the career as some might have thoughts as "my

aim was to become an IAS officer; I have become an IAS as I admire the power and authority and for my parents' social status and not to serve the society; I have accomplished the dreams and now my work is over.' It is a misconception, the work is not over; it has not started yet! The 'Civil Service' is a 'Position' and not a 'Qualification'. Many misunderstand or rather do not distinguish between these two important words when it comes to the civil services scenario. For getting a qualification (for e.g. a degree), we strive hard putting all efforts in learning much and more as one can, to be the topper. Once we get a degree, the work associated with it ends and we do not have any responsibilities or duties to be discharged related to it. Here knowledge matters. The case is different when it comes to a 'Position', which can be considered as a superset of qualification. We attain a position by the same means as we get a qualification but here wisdom matters. Once we get to a position we have many associated responsibilities and duties to be discharged.

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So it can be said that a two-way interaction between the civil servant and the society builds a strong bond between the two. Civil servant is the one who can build the society and in turn the state and the country. He has to make a difference in his area of action. He has to be in a continuous journey of enriching his qualities to mould himself into the true meaning of 'being a Civil Servant'. Let us hope for a strong administrative body which aims for the betterment of the society and create a peaceful and happy life for its residents!

Topic: Globalization Would Finish Small-Scale Industries in India

Globalization is a relatively new phenomenon in India. Till 1991, India followed a rather closed policy. It believed in self-reliance and self-sufficiency. It did not have a lot of contact with the

outside world. In 1991, as a result of an impending economic crisis, the Indian government, then under the leadership of Prime Minister P.V Narasimha Rao, took up a number of reforms that opened us to the outside world. These reforms were namely the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization reforms. We opened up our economy to the outside world so that there would be more exchange. Globalization is the metamorphosis of the individual nations into an integrated entity by means of their interconnection on an economic, social and cultural level, fuelled by easy transport and communication among them. It is the modern renaissance that makes ideas, goods, services, trade, technology and culture permeate into the entire geography of the world thus turning it into a global village.

Globalization would finish small scale industries in India, horror that's set in the minds of Indian citizens belonging to little below or slightly above poverty level. The concept behind Globalization is nothing but a socially, economically & culturally united society which includes the whole world. Trading, capital flow, labor exchange & business would not be limited by any geographical boundary rather it would spread all over the world. Best products from best places at best prices could be available without much territorial bindings. Industries in India can invest in foreign trades and principally accept foreign policies for better performance which in turn would increase economic status of the country. While globalization is a large scale phenomenon, small scale enterprises are a local phenomenon but having effects of dimensions as large as it's global 'friend and foe'. Friend- because both globalization and small scale industries are the two wheels of the vehicle of economic growth and prosperity; foe- because some argue that given the developing nation that India is, Small Scale Industrie (SSIs) can suffer and strangulate to death by the fierce competition put up by globalization. Let us observe and decide.

Low scale industries in India fear globalization wood flood the local business and industries bringing down extreme agony. They fear cheaper foreign products would be preferred than traditional costly Indian classics. But if this fear thought with a rather different view the mentioned crisis can be turned towards economic boom in India. As the foreign products can be imported at cheaper rate, there also lies a possibility of Indian products to be exported at massive rate. Income earned by Indian large scale industries through foreign trade can be partly invested to promote small scale industries by the government equipping small scale industries with the advanced technology and the best materials possible induced through globalization effects. Thus maintaining the chain rule small scale industries gets the chance to produce fine products at cheaper prices and increasing sales rate thus gradually rising towards large scale industry than staying in small scale for ever. Globalization helps in economic growth of any society and there is always a way to improve and find solutions for an economically sound society. When capital

flow is restricted it can never be utilized for betterment of standards, Its the liquidity of capital that helps rise the entire economic status of a country and maintaining a proper balance.

Micro and small scale enterprises have existed in India since ages in the form of traditional skills and knowledge based products made by people for the self sufficiency of rural India. Today as per the government definition, “An industrial undertaking in which the investment in fixed assets in plant and machinery whether held on ownership terms on lease or on hire purchase does not exceed Rs. 10 million, can be categorized as small scale undertaking”.

After independence, the Indian government made various laws to help revive and flourish the SSI because of the employment potential it had at a low capital cost. It needed mediocre technical knowledge and minimal infrastructure to set up. Thus it was and is the most ideal form of employment opportunity for both the urban and rural population. It not only encourages entrepreneurship among people but also makes them self reliant. Govt. funding, support and intensive promotion has aided people to participate more in this successful phenomenon making SSI the second largest employment sector after agriculture. It forms about 45-50% of our exports. The products also form a large percentage of our domestic market too with SSI producing a number of products like confectionaries, spices, beverages, natural essence oils, dyes, sports goods, wooden furniture, glass, ceramic and earthen wares, cotton and woolen knitted products, silk and synthetic wear, leather shoes, bags, garments and novelty items, plastic items, survey instruments, auto parts, clocks and watches, musical instruments, lab chemicals, basic metallic and non-metallic mineral products. They are the dynamic sectors of our economy. It also leads to the preservation of many traditional and indigenous skills and products our country is famous for. It is the road to rural industrialization and ‘rural urbanization’ thus creating a regional balance.

Even though the Indian government had initiated reforms, it was clear that India would take a really long time to start making quick progress. This was because for more than 40 years we followed a very closed policy and as a result we were not on the radar of the countries. To them, India wasn’t a very big opportunity. But the new reforms definitely changed all that. Like any drug, the reforms took time to work up on the problems of the ailing Indian economy. But the initiation of the reforms was a huge step forward for India. India opened up to the outside world. India tried to attract foreign investment in order to boost its economy. The reforms were indeed a success. The reforms has put India back on the map. A country once ignored and forgotten is now a contender for a superpower status.

After foreign capital was pumped into the Indian economy, the economy grew extremely fast. Production increased manifold, millions of people now got jobs, new firms were established, new technology was introduced into India, incomes rose, opportunities multiplied and a lot more happened. Globalization has had a very profound impact on the manufacturing and industrial sector of India. Before the reforms happened in 1991, the Indian government had a very bad industrial policy. India was trying to become socialist like the Soviet Union. Socialism was a very appealing dream to many Indian leaders but what these leaders forgot was that in order to empower the people, you need to provide them with the means to do so. Indian leaders forgot this and tried to replicate the Soviet model. The same applied to the industrial sector. India prioritized the setting up of heavy industries. Consumption goods were given least priority. Manufacture of machines and tools were given more importance than the manufacturing of consumption goods.

India was self reliant and self sufficient but with the march of the world towards industrialization India found its closed policy of trade leading to an impending economic crisis. The main reason behind this was the focus of efforts on heavy industries and lack of it on the consumption goods. From 1991 India witnessed a major change as the govt. introduced liberalization, privatization and globalization reforms to pep up the economy. Soon the world realized what a big 1billion-population-market India was. They brought their goods to India which were mass produced and therefore cheaper and of better quality than the local goods. They started challenging the SSI and thus posed an end to them. Further with the introduction of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the MNCs were facilitated with areas with liberal economic and trade laws, round the clock facilities and concessions to enhance foreign investments and promote exports. This endangered the existence and survival of SSIs.

But this is not the complete picture. A lot of foreign entrepreneurs who do not have the time or funds to build the infrastructure for their own manufacturing unit in India engage a number of SSI owners to produce goods for them in a short span of time and sell them to cater to the international demand. In other words they outsource the manufacturing to the Indians. Thus it leads to more labour absorption and growth of SSIs. Many of the SSIs have turned into LSIs this way. Also the demand for SSI goods will never finish as a lot of their products are not lucrative options for the MNCs. For example, the incense sticks or agarbatties, bangles, pickles, etc. are not a catch for LSIs but have a constant demand and thus SSIs have a great opportunity in identifying such areas.

The government, knowing how much revenue it can mean to the state, also encouraged the foreign companies to come and set up their production here in India. As a result, the government introduced something called the Special Economic Zones or SEZ’s. These were areas where the

firms could come in and establish their production facilities. They would be given adequate facilities and privileges to run their businesses there. The facilities included round the clock electricity and water supply, adequate labour, transport facilities. The firms set up their production here because they had certain privileges out of operating from these SEZ's. They were given tax breaks, incentives, subsidies and a lot more to encourage more production. As a result, thousands of foreign firms thronged to these SEZ's to set up their production. Not only were they eyeing the various concessions given by the state but were also targeting the massive market of 1 billion people. Large companies set up huge industries here in India. Thousands of companies decided to set up their manufacturing here. Production was high.

So it can be said that both globalization and SSIs are the essentials of Indian economy and India must make efforts to promote, sustain and aid both in a fair and unbiased way. A fruitful measure would be to reserve certain goods for production exclusively by the SSIs and their intelligent outsourcing by the govt. to ensure maximum benefits. Also the govt. should advertise the indigenous goods worldwide so that the foreign folk also go in for the ethnic items produced here like khadi, silk, wool, statues, gems, ornaments, etc. as these represent the traditional art form and culture of the region. As far as the financial aids are concerned, the govt. is doing good work to make things simple and possible for the interested individuals by funding and financial support. Also the setting up of institutes for technical training and skill enhancement of the workforce is helping in a big way. While globalization has put us on the map of superpower countries, SSIs have empowered the common man to walk with the same stride as the big-wigs. For India to be a superpower, it is must make efforts to strengthen each and every thread of its economic fabric to make the flag of its success fly high

However it wasn't all a very rosy story. Many Indian producers had to shut their production down because they simply were not able to compete with these new firms with larger production capabilities. Many Indian producers and industrialists perished this way. Globalization had a very bad impact on the small scale industries as well. First of all, its very important to understand that even today, over 70% of India's workforce is engaged in the agricultural sector. This is the sad situation of a country who is aiming to be a superpower in the next 40 years. Small scale industries were not so popular then. There were very few small scale industries. They produced goods on a rather small scale and their markets too were small. Small scale industries in India mainly consisted of soap, cosmetics, shoes, bags, novelty items etc. Since they were produced on a rather small scale, their prices were not that low. They were moderately priced. With the coming of globalization however, the scenario changed. Large factories produced these goods on a much larger scale and made the prices much cheaper and as a result, small scale industries started shutting down because they could not face the competition by the large producers.

By the above analysis, one would believe that globalization has ultimately led to the demise of the small scale industries sector in India. But that is clearly not the case.

Though many firms come to India and set up huge factories, there are many other firms who simply outsource the manufacturing to the Indians. They don't come here and set up factories. They simply contract an Indian factory to produce goods for them. This has become the new trend nowadays. Firms find setting up new factories and infrastructure here in India a big drain of resources and time. They could get the same products without having to establish factories or any sort of infrastructure. That is more cost-effective and reasonable and it saves the firm a lot of money on the long run.

Many contractors in India are not in a position to build huge factories with many production lines. In India, many industries are labour-intensive than capital intensive. This is because India has a huge workforce and they are willing to work for lower wages. What the contractor does is sub-contract the same job to maybe 3-4 small scale producers and gets the job done. He does not have to invest in machinery or employ people for the job.
These small scale industries complete their job and send the products back to the contractor and he ships them to the client abroad. This is best explained with an example. Another way small scale industries actually thrive when globalization is present is when large scale factories sub-contract certain jobs to small-scale industries. Large factories often find it necessary to get certain jobs outsourced from outside.

So we can conclude that Globalization would not finish small scale industries rather if properly practiced would turn small scale industries to large scale massive exporters resulting in economic growth and stability, increased funds and a better lifestyle raising Indian Standards to much higher levels. At the end of the day, when we look at the situation at hand from all sides, we see that globalization has not only sustained small-scale industries in India, but also strengthened it and made it more prosperous.

Topic: Is autonomy the best answer to combat balkanization? (2007)

The perception of man towards a particular situation gives shape to the ideology of balkanization. Balkanization is a concept born out of mind. If people begin to think that they are not less developed to their neighbors or the union government is giving them as much importance as to any other state then will not have the urge to get separated. Balkanization is a geopolitical term originally used to describe the process of fragmentation or division of a region into smaller regions. The term finds origin in the division of the Balkan Peninsula which was held in its entirety by the Ottoman Empire into a number of smaller states. By and large the division of countries gives leaves poignant history and a hostile future and as such the world

balkanization is seen as pejorative. However, in recent years the term comes vis-à-vis democratic rights of an ethnic group and the sustenance of its people. Thus new dimensions of balkanization have come up and rendered the issue very much debatable. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term balkanization as “to break up (as a region or group) into smaller and often hostile units. The word owes its origin to the often divisive nature of the Balkan states.

Balkanization is a relative term what is balkanization for some may be a freedom struggle for some other. So as a concept it cannot be discarded as something bad. For example dissolution of Yugoslavia may be disintegrating phenomena when studied from one view point but it is a liberalizing phenomenon for all the nations that threw off the atrocious Yugoslav government. Balkanization is a pure European term as European countries perceived it (in the WW I period and the Balkan war period) as division and atomization of small states and war-waging lords, more or less “oriental despots” marking the limits of European empire. It is the flip side of European civilization the ugly side of modernity.

Europeans were of the view that Europe cannot be and should not be balkanized but the under developed parts could be. So during the twentieth century colonialism we find Africa being Balkanized for being against balkanization!! The aim here is not to advocate the balkanization rather it should always be prevented. But for this the mother state has to take a different stance; completely different stance from centralizing or providing autonomy. It should understand the demands of the balkanized forces and try to foster socio-economic development in those areas so that the local populace will not feel abandoned from the mainstream. All round development and awareness only can fight the war against balkanization.

In time when groups of different ethnicity, language, and creed are co-existent in one geopolitical location the seeds of balkanization are sown. There is an inherent tendency in people to get separated from each other and make an entity of their own identity. The tension only grows when in a region, one entity feels that its rights have been pushed to margin by others. In absence of appropriate representation and a strong voice, people begin to feel that they may be better benefitted if they have a separate nation of their own. This leads to agitations – in cases for more rights, more representation and in cases for a separate nation-state. For obvious reasons the process becomes violent in the race to gain ‘freedom’ and retain resources. Emerging ethnic kingdoms by fragmentation of the Byzantine Empire marked the entire 14th century on the Balkan Peninsula. The coining of the term itself had to wait five centuries for the time of the emergence of Modern Balkan States in the 19th century and the retreat of the Ottoman Turks. Balkanization was increasingly used by the rising Western powers during romanticism, allegedly first by British diplomacy forced to revert its support of the Ottomans.

Thus Balkanization is hand-in-hand with modernization, if not early modernism, coming out as its casualty. The next Balkanization emerged in 1875-76 with the squeezing and the thinning of the Ottoman remains in the region. This caused the rapid change of multiple borders as the two competing treaties were held almost simultaneously. Trying to consolidate the borders for at least one quick generation, one was held by Russia in San Stefano and the other by Otto van Bismarck in Berlin.

The following Balkanization had to wait until the Balkan Wars and the Fall of Austro-Hungarian Empire. More specifically: two “Balkan Wars” occurred. In the first in 1912, small new nation states, which had gathered together against the long domination by the Ottoman Empire, cooperated in ethnical cleansing of Slavic Muslims from the Balkan territory. The “Balkan War II” occurred just a year after in 1913 when the same Balkan nation states went against each other in the race to win as much land for any given national territory.

Bosnia was special because of its earlier annexation by the declining Austrian-Hungarian Empire, which produced the first safe haven for European Muslims. The phenomena of Balkanization can be analyzed on the Yugoslavian concept. The earlier Yugoslavian union was formed of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia and Albania. (Kosovo got independence only this year).

Former Yugoslavia can be said to be an outcome of the WW I. The country became a republic only in 1945 when the Nazi-German hegemony over it ended with the culmination of WW II. Yugoslavia was a strictly a socialist-communist nation. But the power was nevertheless fully centralized. Whenever there was any tendency of a civil revolution it was put off by a heavy hand. The carnage by Yugoslavian army in Croatia and Albania are the examples of the atrocity of Yugoslavian government on the constituting nations. When the level atrocities became too much there was dissolution of Yugoslavia. Of course the situation has been greatly favored by the dissolution of the USSR (the champion of communist nations) in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Here point to be noted is Yugoslavia at that time was a non-aligned nation and was not party to the East-West cold wars. But it still had to face the music in the aftermath of the cold war only because of the treatment meted out to the constituting parts. Heavy centralization is never a good phenomenon in a multi –ethnic and multi-cultural country. Very recently, Kosovo also declared its freedom and finds itself in the centre stage of international politics. The concern of Russia (which considers it illegal) and China (which has expressed concern) perhaps present the real worry of large unions of ‘unsatisfied’ parts of country insistent on declaring their independence.

Talking about a geopolitical location, when the tendency of being separated from others becomes very strong people of a particular ethnicity feel they have less bargaining power and hence enjoy

fewer benefits when they are a part of a bigger nation. They begin to feel that they will get better benefits if they are a separate nation. So they start agitating. Sometimes the agitation is a peaceful struggle but more often than not it is an act of terrorism. This movement is also known as cessationist movement. Different countries face such problems time to time (especially the large nations). In India this trend can be seen in the movement for separate khalistan nation, the claim of ULFA terrorists to have a separate nation etc. The same trend can be seen in Srilanka (the LTTE claim for a separate Jaffana state), in the USA (Alaskan movement), in Iran, in Iraq, in the UK (the earlier Scotland movement. So many countries of today face the problem of balkanization. The topic requires finding a method to fight balkanization. There can be two ways: autonomy or strong central power.

The case of Soviet Union propounds the context of centralized development in handful of regions. With the obsession of Cold War at hand, the Soviet government concentrated on high end technology development in the field of defense, space exploration etc. The center of power was at Moscow and the requirements of the remote areas of the union took back seat. By 1982 the stagnation of the Soviet economy was obvious, as evidenced by the fact that the Soviet Union had been importing grain from the U.S. throughout the 1970s, but the system was so firmly entrenched that any real change seemed impossible. A huge rate of defense spending consumed large parts of the economy. The transition period that separated the Brezhnev and Gorbachev eras resembled the former much more than the latter, although hints of reform emerged as early as 1983. After the Andropov and Chernenko interregnum, Gorbachev rose to power amidst Afghanistan war. Glasnost and Perestroika took heavy casualties on the Soviet Union and the dissention which was being piled up for two-three decade in the Soviet constituents took a violent shape and dissolution of the USSR was just a matter of time. The gun powder was ignited by the act of Aijerbaijan on people of Armenian descend. There was wide spread demand from the constituent Soviet unions to get separated from the USSR and finally the inevitable happened on the Christmas day of 1991.

The difference between Yugoslavian dissolution and the soviet dissolution is: Soviet republic dissolved only when leeway in terms of freeness (glasnost and perestroika) was granted by the government and the dissolution was not too bloody a struggle; whereas on the other hand Yugoslavian dissolution was a completely messy and bloody affair- a direct opposition to centralized power. The above two states of affair show balkanization occurs when there is heavy centralization in a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural nation.

Now let’s see the other side of the coin: The relationship of autonomy and balkanization. The best example of a large republic granting autonomy to its state is the USA. USA is a federal state in which there is full autonomy of the states. The autonomy extends to many spheres including

the law of the land also. United States of America seems to be exemplary model of how autonomy can curb balkanization. Each of the 50 states in America has their own set of law which, in many cases, is entirely different from the others – capital punishment, gun control, drinking age etc. The states are also at complete autonomy to formulate and execute their laws. However, the reasons for non-cessations movement may not lie in autonomy alone. Consider the fact that the American economy – industry, agriculture, services are highly decentralized over the entire area of the country. The states also compete with each other to lure the industry to establish in their zones. Besides, the ethnic conflicts based on origin, language are almost non-existent since apart from the native Indians, the ethnicity and origin of people is similar. Balkanization of America is generally presented as a call against US immigrant rights to keep ethnic and religious origin intact. Largely responding to the growing Latin population in Northern America which succeeds in keeping its language autonomy, those calls echo racist calls for forced assimilation by spreading fear from emerging claim for difference.

Balkanization here is particularly aimed as an accusation against Mexicans, who in the minds of racist movements do not belong to 'Whites, Yellows and Blacks' and are thus subdividing perceived monolith of the Caucasian race. Hence we cannot say in a definitive voice that autonomy restricts the tendency towards fragmentation; especially in the back drop of two diametrically different outcome of autonomy in the erstwhile USSR and today's USA. Many different factors are responsible for the occurrence or non-occurrence of balkanization.

Ayn Rand quoted in Global Balkanization: "As to the stagnation under tribal rule -take a look at the Balkans. At the start of this century, the Balkans was regarded as the disgrace of Europe. Six or eight tribes, plus a number of sub-tribes with unpronounceable names, were crowded on the Balkan Peninsula, engaging in endless wars among themselves or being conquered by stronger neighbors or practicing violence for the sake of violence over some microscopic language differences. Balkanization - the break-up of larger nations into ethnic tribes - was used as a pejorative term by European intellectuals of the time. Those same intellectuals were pathetically proud when they managed, after World War I, to glue most of the Balkan tribes together into two larger countries: Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. But the tribes never vanished; they have been popping up in minor explosions all along, and a major one is possible at any time."

Now we can discuss the concepts of autonomy and centralization: as the cause of balkanization from Indian perspective. Like the USSR or Yugoslavia or the USA India is also large multi-ethnic country. India also faced the problems of balkanization many times in last half century; be it the Khalistan movement or ULFA uprising or the present Kashmir tension. We need not go into exploring the reason for such divisive movements rather we should concentrate on the methodology to combat it. Our main thrust will be either autonomy or heavy centralization. Let's

consider the case of centralization scenario first. Centralization can curb the impending balkanization as a short term measure. Heavy centralization means a strong centre always looking down on the weaker states. Any slightest dissention is being dealt with a heavy hand by the centre. This will surely intimidate the divisive forces to take any revolutionary step but at the same time it will pile up their dissentions within themselves which will explode sooner or later. The concept of balkanization in India is multi-dimensional – lingual, ethnic, religious and ideological. Centralization can curb the impending balkanization as a short term measure. Heavy centralization means a strong centre always looking down on the weaker states. Any slightest dissention is being dealt with a heavy hand by the centre. This will surely intimidate the divisive forces to take any revolutionary step but at the same time it will pile up their dissentions within themselves which will explode sooner or later.

A government that uses an iron clad hand for enforcing the 'nationalism' on its states and its people would perhaps be looking down the barrel of revolution in long term. There can be no question regarding decentralization of economy. The after-effects of localization of economic centers are already visible in Mumbai – the call for return of people from UP & Bihar to their own states and voices of Marathas first. Implausible, though it may seem to many, the centralization of economy has also taken the government's focus from traditionally agricultural zones like Vidarbh and Rayalseema. Some special cases like Punjab's Khalistan, Kashmiri Separatist movements also exist which have to be considered specially, for there is/was a presence of external element in these states. The agitation took the form of violent struggle and is considered terrorism. Such cases only advocate the presence of capable, strong centre. State autonomy is unthinkable in nations where the cessation movement has assumed the flavor of terrorist sabotage. For example autonomy will fail to prevent balkanization, in fact gather momentum for it, if granted to countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. So we stand at a point where neither autonomy nor heavy centralization is of any good help to prevent the evil of balkanization.

The deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence in the face of overwhelming social forces, of historical heritage, of external culture, and of the technique of life. In a set up like ours where the nation is characterized by so many difference in social, economic parameters, the forces of separation cannot be left unchecked. The smaller parties may gradually call for higher independence from the Indian union for electoral gain which might not be the favorable situation for us. Autonomy is a double edged sword if not used properly it will harm in more ways. And to reap the benefits of this weapon one has to have a certain level of maturity and a favorable political set up which, unfortunately India lacks. There are some scholars who advocate

autonomy to combat balkanization. But autonomy is no God. And in Indian concept total autonomy will result in utter disaster. Why so? For the same reason as that of heavy centralization. For example autonomy will fail to prevent balkanization, in fact gather momentum for it, if granted to countries like Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan etc. So we stand at a point where neither autonomy nor heavy centralization is of any good help to prevent the evil of balkanization. The only way to combat the evil of balkanization is to attack it at the level of human brain. It can be tackled by developmental administration. The development activity - be it on an autonomous stare or a centralized state always work as a force against balkanization. Whenever there is development people begin to understand that the government is working for them and they will not have the courage or any valid reason for ceding away from the union.

So, it can be said that, in Indian perspective the present administrative set up is appropriate in the present scenario. At present we have a quasi-federal set up. This is a mid way between full autonomy and full centralization. The states have been provided autonomy in many important matters but there is provision for central control of the states through some administrative machinery. In this way the states cry for more power has been answered so also the control of the states when the state government becomes wayward. But the quasi-federalism as practiced is not the appropriate method. We need to address issues like equitable distribution of industrialization, removing regional disparity, spread of education and awareness throughout the country. Of course there will be some tension among the states(mainly created by the regional political parties) but hey can be effectively dealt with the central administration in a strong manner provided that the central government has the moral authority to do so. And from where does this moral authority come? It comes from peoples' acceptance of the union government. In this way the states cry for more power has been answered so also the control of the states when the state government becomes wayward. But the quasi-federalism as practiced is not the appropriate method. We need to address issues like equitable distribution of industrialization, removing regional disparity, spread of education and awareness throughout the country.

Topic: The implications of globalization for India

Globalization-the most prevalent pheno-menon during the 1990s and for the future means coming together of various nations and their economies under a single umbrella. It is a process where there is no restriction on the movement of capital, investment, funds, profits, labour, information, ideas, politics and what not. If economics is the basis of everything then the process of globalization has been accelerated because of the ongoing economic reforms started since 1991. Indian economy had experienced major policy changes in early 1990s. The new economic reform, popularly known as, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG model) aimed

at making the Indian economy as fastest growing economy and globally competitive. The series of reforms undertaken with respect to industrial sector, trade as well as financial sector aimed at making the economy more efficient. With the onset of reforms to liberalize the Indian economy in July of 1991, a new chapter has dawned for India and her billion plus population. This period of economic transition has had a tremendous impact on the overall economic development of almost all major sectors of the economy, and its effects over the last decade can hardly be overlooked. Besides, it also marks the advent of the real integration of the Indian economy into the global economy.

Globalization is essentially an economic phenomenon which has strong implications. To understand the effect of globalization on Indian economy, society, culture, religion and psyche, it is essential for us to know how and when economic reforms were carried out. IMP (International Monetary Fund) has prescribed a set of rules for the carrying out of economic reforms. When the Chandra Sekhar's government was defeated at the hands of Congress, Indian economy was undergoing through a chaotic situation. The 1991 Gulf war aggravated the international oil prices, which seriously affected India's BoP (Balance of Payment) situation. Exports were low and imports were high (due to high price of oil and petroleum). India's economic performance was in doldrums because industrial production plunged to the _round. Fiscal deficit soared up to new heights. This era of reforms has also ushered in a remarkable change in the Indian mindset, as it deviates from the traditional values held since Independence in 1947, such as self reliance and socialistic policies of economic development, which mainly due to the inward looking restrictive form of governance, resulted in the isolation, overall backwardness and inefficiency of the economy, amongst a host of other problems. This, despite the fact that India has always had the potential to be on the fast track to prosperity.

Now that India is in the process of restructuring her economy, with aspirations of elevating herself from her present desolate position in the world, the need to speed up her economic development is even more imperative. And having witnessed the positive role that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has played in the rapid economic growth of most of the Southeast Asian countries and most notably China, India has embarked on an ambitious plan to emulate the successes of her neighbors to the east and is trying to sell herself as a safe and profitable destination for FDI.

Which earned nothing except high rate of inflation? Due to the populist form of government spending in the I980s, supported by huge borrowings without sufficient return, India's internal and external debt touched the sky. Short terms commercial borrowings from abroad led to a difficult situation for the government. India virtually came to the brink of default. Under this

situation, the Government borrowed a huge sum of conditional loan' from IMF. Thus India became obliged to follow IMF prescribed 'structural reforms'. The IMF package consists of a set of economic policies for a debt-ridden and low performing economy for the short run which is called `stabilization measures', and which includes

(i) Monetary policies

- positive real interest rates
- increase in reserve rate
- more vigorous open market operations
- credit controls

(ii) Realignment of the exchange rate to a near market determined rate.

(iii) Reduction of budgetary deficits

- increased revenue mobilization efforts
- Review of public investment priorities and identification of a core programme of investment.

(iv) Real wage restraint removal of formal indexation arrangements

- The Long Term 'Structural Reforms' prescribed by IMF include

(i) Promotion of private sector (domestic and foreign)

- definitive political commitment
- rapid improvement in infrastructure
- improvement in regulatory regimes
- facilitation of investment approval procedures

(ii) Commercialization of public enterprises-improvement in operational efficiency

- Privatization programmes

(iii) Financial sectors reforms

- movement to market determined rates
- capital market development
- including promotion of stock exchanges

(iv) Liberalization of trade regime

- removal of import and exchange control and progress towards lower and less-dispersed band of tariffs.

(v) Price-flexibility

(vi) Tax-reforms

- reduction of distortionary effects on resource allocation increased elasticity of tax-system

(vii) Administrative reforms reduction in size of public service

- safety net well targeted programmes of transfers to vulnerable groups.
- training, credit and employment programmes for vulnerable group.

Impact of Globalization on Indian Economy

Due to globalization, the export sector of the Indian economy received a big boost. The growth performance of the exports improved during 1993-1996. During theperiod April-September 2000, the export growth rate touched the figure of 22"),, while imports stood at around 15%. Thus India's current account situation improved due to globalization led economic reforms. Government investment expenditure has been reduced but not fiscal deficit which is still around 5% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product). This is because of high consumption expenditure on the part of the government. Government is stressing on disinvestment of public sector units. For the employees. government has started VRS (Voluntary Retirement Scheme). Although defence expenditure has gone up, but Government has reduced subsidies on food. Fertilizer and electricity. Social sector investment as a percentage of GDP has not increased. Expenditure on health and education is not substantial. Although efforts of privatization has given an impetus to the private sector, but employment generation by the private sector is meagre.

The proponents of globalization in India have argued that economic integration will improve the allocative efficiency of resources, reduce the capital output ratio, and increase the labour productiyig, help to develop the export spheres and export culture, increase the inflow of the capital and updated technology into the country, increase the degree of competition in the domestic economy, reduce the relative prices of industrial and manufactured goods, improve terms of trade in agriculture and in general give a boost to the average growth of the economy in the years to come. lo some extent this has proved true.

Effect of Globalization on Poverty and Malnutrition

In the World Food Summit, in 1996, it was estimated that around 840 million people around the world are suffering from malnutrition and the major cause behind this is poverty. Globalization did not uplift the position of agricultural labourers and share croppers. Since the majority of Indian population is engaged in the agrarian sector, thus low impact of globalization on agricultures did not cure poverty and thus malnutrition. Prof. Amartya Sell has emphasized the need for building 'safety net' for the vulnerable section of the society, so that globalization process does not pauperize the poor. In India we've found that globalization did not help in

reducing the incidence of poverty. It is mainly because government investment to agricultural sector has been reduced along with an increase in the issue price in the PDS (Public Distribution System).

The package for poors never reached them. Although procurement prices of grains has been increased by the Commission of Agricultural Cost and Pricing, but it helped mainly the rich farmers of Punjab and Haryana. Middlemen who buy grains at cheaper rates from small farmers also benefitted under this scheme. The issue prices of grains through PDS have become higher than the market prices, leading to surplus stock of food available with the FCI (Food Corporation of India). Due to anachronistic methods of food storage, there has been a lot of wastage. Thus in a country where food grain production touched 206 million tonnes in the year 1999-2000 there has been an insufficient demand due to insufficient distribution and poverty leading to under nutrition and malnutrition. Moreover pulse and coarse grain production has declined over the period, leading to less nutritious diet available for the masses.

Though the New Agricultural Policy (2000) aims at 4% growth rate in food grain production through large-scale capital-intensive farming, but we can discern that globalization has not yet benefitted the poor.

Implications of Globalisation for Agriculture

Under WTO agreement, the product patent has replaced process patent and this extends over to agriculture. Large MNCs (Multi-National Companies) with immense R & D (Research and Development) facilities, are encroaching upon India's agriculture. which can be disastrous for the Indian farmers. The impact of biotechnology can be tremendous as it may lead to more technology division rather than diffusion between the East and the West. High yielding pest resistant breeds of plants from foreign companies can help the west, leading to decline in India's primary exports. Until and unless government funds are siphoned off to research. the result can be horrendous.

Moreover cheaper food import from abroad can lead to declining demands for Indian food, which can have worse impact on Indian farmers side by side, if the -government reduces subsidies on fertilizer and other raw materials, then it will have a fatal impact on Indian agricultural sector. The failure of Seattle WTO Conference in December, 1999 shows that West is also divided about the question of giving subsidies to the agricultural sector. Though due to poor management and storage facilities, India is wasting a bulk of food it produces, but through an alternative method of better marketing and distribution, India's position can be improved. The process of globalisation will bear more fruits, if government takes the initiative in the areas of poverty reduction, rural development and agricultural growth.

Impact on Politics, Religion, Culture and Indian Psyche

Globalization means more economic inter-dependence and globalization of markets. A new thrust on international business has emerged. Commercialization has become the target of each and every firm. Hardly one has not heard the name of Pepsi or Coca-Cola. Brand name of companies has replaced the last shred of ethics from our heart. Degeneration of humanity has become a part and parcel of everyday life. Though American economists often wonder about more transparency accompanied with globalization, but in India the period of economic reforms for globalization has coincided with the era of corruption and degeneration. There is also a link between globalization and communali-zation. Our secular politics is under threat from communalism. There is a preplanned agenda to change the constitution. But what is the relation between globalization and communalism? Globalization leads to more unemployment if economic reforms are not properly implemented. According to some, globalization is a conspiracy of the West against the development of the East. It is a capitalist phenomenon and has been termed as ‘neo-imperialism’.

Globalization will lead to the end of sovereignty of a nation. Indian political system now seems to work under instructions given from White House. The essence of Indian State and nationalism is eroding. Under such a situation. Some political parties on one hand are too much bothered about economic reforms without thinking about its consequences, and oil the other hand to pacify people’s frustration and anger owing to unemployment and inequality; they are playing with the sentiments by instigating one religion against another. The cult of Hindutva has become prevalent because public has been misguided that the cause behind their impoverishment and economic decline, is a particular community. In this way, people can be brain-washed and their intellect can be channelized into destructive activities rather than questioning the very basis of globalisation. A country with 80% of its population being Hindus, does not need to be told how to be a ‘Hindu’. The politics of ‘Ram’ has spread from USA to India, because of some NRIs (Non-Residential Indians) sending funds from USA.

Some kind of vested interest always lies behind such activities. Thus religion has become politics; politics has become economic reforms’. Commercialisation has narrowed down people’s thinking horizon. Hypocrisy of being a ‘modern’ man is like holding a ‘cell phone’ without knowing about the ‘enlightenment movement in Europe’. The two antagonistic forces of money-making (greed) and holding ones religious belief (orthodoxy) will clash, only if hypocrisy is absent. Otherwise it can be said Indians have stopped becoming conscious (at mental state), or they don’t think or know about their own culture, which says that maximum welfare means welfare to the maximum number of people. India being a land of Buddha and Veda, is now teaching the world how to kill thousands of people through a single nuclear device.

Thus globalization has not spread the message of peace and tranquility; it has taught us how to be powerful. India has become a small shark among big sharks.

Globalization, Information Technology and India's World Diplomacy

India is on the verge of becoming an IT (Information Technology) giant. The Hyderabad's name has been changed into 'Cyberabad' because of Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's initiative of promoting IT in his state. It is due to globalization only that India has carved a niche for itself in the development of softwares and its export. The diffusion of IT from Silicon Valley of the US to Bangalore has been possible only because of globalization. Globalization policy includes curbing of trade barriers for freer trade and enhancement of market-economy. Indeed, India's role in solving the Y2K bug and other problems, is immense.

The availability of cheap computer skilled and English speaking labour has greatly helped countries like USA. Germany who are facing shortage of IT-professionals. The IT will enhance E-Commerce (electronic-commerce) and thus endorse commercialization of product in the form of technological knowhow, as well as real products. India has become a huge market for the US and Chinese goods.

It is a strategy of every developed country to tap India's market as well as its potential. On the other hand India has emerged as a strong country in world's politics and diplomacy. The year 2000 will go down as the year in which India scored one diplomatic triumph after another. Following former US President Bill Clinton's epoch-making visit to India in March 2000 and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's equally important visit to the US. Russian President Vladimir Putin came visiting fit the intenegnum, diplomacy was a high profile activity with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh Flying to various pans of the globe to propagate and further India's interests in the various global fora, mainly emphasizing our concern with cross-border terrorism that had brought the Kargil conflict in the wake of Vajpayee's historic Lahore trip in 1999.

Conclusion

Globalization has many meanings depending on the context and on the person who is talking about. Though the precise definition of globalization is still unavailable a few definitions are worth viewing, Guy Brainbant: says that the process of globalization not only includes opening up of world trade, development of advanced means of communication, internationalization of financial markets, growing importance of MNCs, population migrations and more generally increased mobility of persons, goods, capital, data and ideas but also infections, diseases and pollution. The term globalization refers to the integration of economies of the world through

uninhibited trade and financial flows, as also through mutual exchange of technology and knowledge.

Ideally, it also contains free inter-country movement of labor. In context to India, this implies opening up the economy to foreign direct investment by providing facilities to foreign companies to invest in different fields of economic activity in India, removing constraints and obstacles to the entry of MNCs in India, allowing Indian companies to enter into foreign collaborations and also encouraging them to set up joint ventures abroad; carrying out massive import liberalization programs by switching over from quantitative restrictions to tariffs and import duties, therefore globalization has been identified with the policy reforms of 1991 in India. India made it clear, time and again, that it would not talk to Pakistan until it stopped aiding and abetting cross-border terrorism by Musharraf and his men in the garb of Jehadis or Mujahideen- It is only because of the 'opening-up of India', that the international community is listening to us.

Globalization has provided a platform to India to reach to its audience either for political cause or economic. The progress of economic reforms has impressed the World Bank Chief Mr. James Wolfenson and he promised more loans to India in the coining years, if India's performance betters.'

Topic: Liberalization & its impact on the Indian Economy

The present bout of economic reforms in India-those started in the nineties mark both continuity and a break with India's post-independence development strategy. India's development strategy after independence was largely influenced by reservation regarding the ability of the market forts to bring about on their own an optimum allocation of resources. Thus balancing the country's two main objectives 'growth' and 'equity'. A realization has since dawned on policy-makers, based on India's own experience and the experience of other countries. that: the domestic economy has now reached a threshold where for better utilization of resources the benefits of the market forces can he harnessed, by proper market-friendly macro and micro-economic policies helping both in higher growth and more equity, This has initiated a serious debate in the country on our development strategy for opening up the economy and allowing more market orientation. by removing major Government interventions and regulations.

Since 1977, and specially after 1985-86.6 the Government has embarked upon a series of economic reforms leading towards liberalization and deregulation. Subsequently, there has been a significant improvement in the growth rate of the country-from the long existing, low rate of income growth of 3.5 percent to an average growth rate of 5.5 per cent and above. As noted, the changes in the policy packages towards deregulation. Liberalization and opening up of the economy had been initiated in the late 70s and early 80s. These changes were not systematic and

were never integrated into an overall framework. According to many economists, these changes were rather slow but not monotonic, until July 1991 when the new Congress Government came to power. Since then the change in the policy packages have picked up momentum. There have been major changes since July 1991. The present Mannohan Singh led Congress Government came into power in 2004. It has further extended the liberalization policy started in 1991. its 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 budgets the government has brought alongwith almost simultaneous changes in trade and finance announced outside the Budget. These changes are primarily confined to Central Government activities and have not been given any general policy directive to integrate with the overall policy packages of the State Government.

The major changes in India's economic reforms fall broadly under five heads-industrial, trade, financial, fiscal and monetary. The Government's key economic objective is to restore sustained high growth which is essential to alleviate poverty and raise the standard of living. In pursuit of these objectives the Government's reform strategy aims at achieving over the course of the next five years: (I) a liberalized trade regime characterized by tariff rates comparable to other industrializing developing countries and the absence of discretionary import licensing (with the exception of a small negative list): (2) an exchange rate system which is free of the allocative restrictions of trade:(3) a financial system operating in a competitive market environment and regulated by sound prudential norms and standards: (4) an efficient and dynamic industrial sector subject only to regulations relating to environmental security, strategic concerns. industrial safety and unfair trading and monopolistic practices: and (5) an autonomous. competitive and streamlined public enterprise sector geared to the provision of essential infrastructural goods and services, the development of key natural resources and areas of strategic concern.

It involves taking every step necessary to ensure that the burden of adjustment is fairly distributed and that the very poor are protected. As a first step in this direction the Government has established a National Renewal Fund to provide a social safety net. The thrust of the reform programme would initially be on casing the country's extremely tight external payments situation and reducing inflation. In this context, the Government intends to nurture a stable exchange rate policy geared to maintain the rupee constant in nominal terms and to rely on fiscal adjustment accompanied by a tight monetary policy to contain inflation.

But this is an initial phase. Stabilization by itself is not enough. As traditional demand impulses originating from fiscal policy will remain constrained in the next two to three years, the main impetus for sustainable economic growth has to originate with efficiency and productivity growth brought about through the expansion of investment and exports. Under-pinning such a path of growth must be a consistent and comprehensive structural reforms strategy designed to

promote exports to improve the relationship between the return on investment and the cost of capital, and to increase the degree competition between firms in the domestic and external markets so that there are adequate incentives for upgrading the technology, improving efficiency and reducing costs.

The main emphasis of the fiscal policy is to reduce the Central Government's fiscal deficit. within the broader context of adjustment of the overall public sector budget. Reducing the overall public sector budget will require increased financial discipline by the State Government as well, and the Central Government will encourage the State Government to take steps to improve their fiscal performance and to streamline the working of the enterprises. In this context a comprehensive tax reform is proposed. It will improve: (i) the elasticity of tax revenue through identification of new areas and increasing the share of direct tax as a proportion of total tax revenue, (ii) a more equitable and broad based system particularly with regard to commodity taxation and personal taxation, (iii) the removal of anomalies that distort economic incentives and simplification and rationalization of customs, tariffs, elimination of exemptions as well as a reduction in the average level of tariffs and finally improve compliance of direct taxes and strengthen enforcements. In this context also, the need for rationalization and reduction of subsidies and for moving to a more objective system of administered price has been emphasized.

Regarding exchange rate policy it emphasized the adjustment of exchange rate so as to provide a significant real depreciation to improve export incentives and international competitiveness. In this context the Government intended to keep the nominal exchange rate stable by a suitable fiscal and monetary policy. In the immediate future to achieve stabilization. Government visualizes a tightening of credit and monetary policies. Free higher interest rates and higher cash reserve ratios. It also proposes, by declining the recourse to financial savings by the Government, a larger volume of supply of domestic credit to the private sector.

The Government recognizes that trade reform is an essential element for securing supply response to facilitate the overall restructuring of the economy and to restore external payment viability. There are five key medium term objectives in the Government's trade policy agenda: (I) [he broadening and implication of export incentive measures and the removal of restrictions on exports: (2) The elimination of quantitative restrictions on imports: (3) Substantial reduction in the tariff rates: (4) The decimalization of exports and imports with the exception of a less items and finally moving to a foreign exchange system which is free of allocative restrictions for trade. The Government also recognizes that the temporary restriction on import which had to be imposed by the Reserve Bank of India need to be relaxed.

The Government recognized that a major restructuring of Indian economy, implied by its agenda, will very much depend on the success of its industrial, policy reforms. In this context a large

number of sick firms which constitute a drain on the Government budget, with their unpaid outstanding loans, weakening the financial system, in many cases with the firms closing down leaving their creditors unreimbursed, have to be taken care of. For the restructuring of existing sick and loss-making companies, both in the public and private sector. The Government will review the existing provisions of various laws governing labour relations, the State and the local government's role in restructuring regulations governing transfer of land, the procedure of liquidation under the Companies Act and other relevant aspects. The Government is aware that the prerequisite of having a safety net or social insurance scheme is to provide support for displaced workers in the organized sector. The Government's industrial policy strategy marks a major step forward towards changing the regulatory structure of industries. It initiated major changes including comprehensive delicensing abolition of entry controls related to the MRTP Act and automatic approval of foreign technology agreements and foreign investments, among others. The changes in policies contenting foreign technology and foreign investment will enable Indian industries to forge much more with foreign investors and suppliers of technology than has been possible in the past.

The Government's ownership of the financial and banking institutions has enabled it to achieve the multiple objectives of mobilization of resources. integration of the rural population into the financial mainstream, enhancement of availability of long teen loans to all levels of industry and agriculture and increased access to credit to small industrialists, farmers and weaker sections of society. However, there are weaknesses and imbalances. The statutory liquidity ratio and cash reserve ratio levels are high, which implies low return for commercial banks on their funds. This reduces the reserves available to non-priority borrowers and raises their costs in moving to market based operations of the financial institutions. Measures have been taken to strengthen the capital markets, the rates for wheand the full statutory powers are to be given to independent agencies to regulate security markets. The high level Narasimham Committee had been established to review the structure.

In line with the recommendations of the Narasimham Committee further reforms of the financial sector will be formulated to increase the efficiency of the financial intermediation. The measures required to meet these objectives would particularly involve a phased reduction of priority lending schemes towards the targeted deserving groups and eventual elimination of the subsidies involved, formulation of prudential norms and standards to guide efforts in recapitalization of the banking sector and full decontrol of deposit rates.

India's severely constrained budgetary circumstances create both the need and the opportunity for placing greater reliance on the private sector for resources mobilization and investment. Public enterprises provide many of the basic and critical inputs in India. It is a matter of serious

concern that inadequate attention has been paid to-improving their efficiency. In the context of public enterprise restructuring it will be important to assess the social cost involved, with the cloture of sick units and to develop options and measures for compensation of retrenched labour. Enterprises in areas judged appropriate for continued public sector involvement will be provided with greater degree of managerial autonomy along with a progressive reduction in budgetary transfers and loans. Sale of selected firms, or partial divestment for specific sectors is being increasingly, pursued.

However, a large proportion of India's population continues to be subject to "malnutrition and ill health. For this group, the Government is committed to minimise their share of the burden of adjustment. Thus the Government should provide higher outlays on elementary education, rural drinking water supply, and assistance to small and marginal farmers, programmes for women and children. programmes for welfare of scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and the weaker sections of the society, and increased expenditure on infrastructure and employment generation projects in rural areas. Further steps have to be taken to re-allocate social expenditure, particularly in health and education for the poor. Additional cost-effective compensatory programmes- particularly in the areas of nutrition and employment, should be strengthened and broadened. In this context the establishment of a National Renewal Fund has been proposed. Against this backdrop of proposed policy changes, the first set of changes introduced by the Government comprises increasing of taxes and reduction in Government expenditure, in order to reduce the deficit. Simultaneously, there have been adjustments in the exchange rates to make exports more attractive and to control imports to narrow the balance of payment gap. Along with this a tight monetary policy was followed. Subsequent assessments however revealed that these measures were insufficient to reduce excess demand for imports. Consequently, the Government imposed emergency credit restrictions on imports. Unfortunately, although the Government took timely measures in the field of trade, industrial policy and fiscal measures, it took a comparatively longer time to introduce financial liberalization measures, public enterprise reform and measures affecting the mobility of labour and capital which are normally known as entry/exit policy

By introducing all these changes, the Government has been successful in its stabilization attempts to a certain extent. For instance, the foreign exchange reserve has reached 289.99 billion $ on 6 July, 2012, though it should be realized that this benefit is only a one time-gain, resulting primarily from multilateral aids. Thus a major part of multilateral aid has been used for debt servicing. Thus, the net inflow is still positive. There are differences of opinion as to the potential adverse effect of attaining stabilization by this method. For example, to reduce the gap the contribution of export growth has long term stable implications, but resorting to too much

import compression, will affect adversely the possibility of export growth, and may prove to be self-defeating, especially if the import component of non-tradition exports is very high.

With regard to the impact of economic reforms on social expenditure and poverty alleviation it is noted that the reforms have affected public expenditure and many of the key social services areas like health, sanitation, water supply etc. which contribute to the welfare of the poor. It does not mean that there is no scope for economizing these expenditures but it implies that it should be done carefully. Any across the board reduction may be politically and administratively easy but would be harmful to the poor.

The essence of the present economic reforms. Understandably, is to resort to tile market and make price corrections according to the relative scarcity values and rates of returns for all inputs in the productive system. But experience shows that in the long run, when the economy is not grossing at a fast pace (i.e. under a contractionary stabilization phase) these price shifts retorts in the reduction in the reduction in the welfare of some sections of the society while benefiting other sections both in absolute and relative terms. The fall in real contraption per capita has resulted in a significant increase in the level of poverty ratio and accordingly the number of people below tile poverty line. A conservative estimate using Planning Commission methodology and database shows that nearly 6 to 7 million people went down the poverty line during this period. This is a contrast with an annual improvement of nearly 10 to I S million moving above the poverty line over the last decade. Thus Overall, it makes a difference in terms of a setback in the poverty alleviation pace by nearly 20 millions. with reference to the trend values. this scenario has high political and social sensitivity. In order to make the reform process morally and socially acceptable and politically feasible, a conscious positive programme on poverty alleviation will be needed. The need for such a programme will be more felt if the message is that the present structural adjustment phase will last for more than 3 to 4 years.

The economic reform process also breeds a class of-new poor". These are the people who will be affected by the restructuring process through 'closures'. Many of them are at the higher and middle income level mostly in the organized sector and easy to identify. They are the target groups which can be covered by the National Renewal Fund. In this context it should be noted that already there has been a significant increase in the percent of unemployed. To provide a cushion to the poor against high price increase, the Government uses the Public Distribution System (PDS): however its effectiveness needs to be improved.

For instance: (1) The inter-State PDS's allocation is made on a per capita basis regardless of income: (2) within a given area tine poor-income groups are not functionally the most important beneficiaries of the PDS. In West Bengal, for example the PDS financed 54 percent of wheat consumption of the rural highest income groups; (3) the PDS is grossly inadequate, especially in

areas with high poverty intensity. The income of the poor is much too low to take advantage even of the PDS: and finally, the whole approach towards impact on the vulnerable section of the society should he reviewed in the light of reduced public expenditure on social programmes. For example, cuts in the health programme could lead to increase in India's already high incidence of tropical diseases. In addition, a poor education programme has its impact not only on the rural wage of the poor but also in the drive for export growth and adoption of better technology, by making the labour force more illiterate.

The stabilization package is giving the anticipated results: it has also skillfully combined some of the structural adjustment changes. However, the adequacy of the structural adjustment elements and the growth factors in the stabilization programme of the Government has been questioned by many economists. It is felt that many of the measures taken are on the soft side as it does not remove many implicit subsidies. In this context, measures to contain the Government wages bill have not been given proper priority. With regard to taxation, it is felt that even now, the indirect tax rates in India. Particularly on imports are very high compared to other LDCs. Of the measures on adjustment that have been implemented, almost all are in the Central Government sector: whereas substantial fiscal deficit exists in the States. almost close to that of the Centre of nearly 1.8 per cent of GDP. More exhaustive measures need to be taken to curtail the States' expenditure pattern. With regard to the cut in the capital expenditure, it is rightly realised that there are many wasteful expenditure items in the present composition of public investment. One should, however, be cautious not to reduce them indiscriminately, since in this process, along with the unproductive, the productive sectors, also may suffer a cut.

The 'exit rules' constraining firms from liquidating their assets or retrenching workers, remain major hindrances to improving their efficiency and new investments to the organized sector. Any postponement of a policy in this area does not fit with the basic philosophy of structural reform and efficiency. As to the role of foreign investment, they should be given more open-ended facilities, since even now there remain a large number of constraints in the form of Government restrictions on remittances of profit, and Government's approval required for some major productive sectors. In the field of financial liberalization, a quicker action is needed on the Narasimham Committee's Report. Without a sound financial superstructure the passage to the market system may result to problems, as was observed in the stock market debacle very recently. The financial reforms would strengthen the prudential financial recoveries and allow private banks, foreign and domestic, to bring competition to the financial sector. In the field of agriculture, no specific action has been taken for its betterment. This is the area where coordination with the States sector would be required. Public sector needs greater positive reforms in addition to reduction in the capital expenditure as given in the last two Budgets. The

public sector should be allowed to adjust to the new policy frame by focusing on issues like: (i) privatisation; and (ii) closure of enterprises that would not survive in a competitive environment.

Finally, although India has successfully diversified and expanded its export base, the major contribution in India's export growth has come from the demand pull of the receiving countries (especially the developed countries). Only a very small portion can be accounted for by changes in market composition and price competitiveness. Indeed it is only the price factor and a prudent spread over different markets which can help in further increasing India's exports, in future. This is true especially when the international trade buoyancy does not give rise to much optimism. However, for increasing exports, apart from reducing domestic costs, the country will need better links, with the international market. For this, efficient transport and communication links will be needed to back our trade and investment policy. It is the experience of most countries that in the process of reducing costs and improving quality of products the role of literate labour force and skilled manpower should get high priority. Indeed, absorbing higher technology needs a correspondingly well-trained, literate and healthy labour force. In this context the heavy cut in human development expenditure under the recent budget and the low emphasis on domestic R & D (needed to improve the ability to absorb and indigenise foreign technology) are disappointing.

India initiated the process of economic reforms with several handicaps. A high poverty ratio with nearly 32 to 40 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. A very low foreign exchange reserve and level of confidence about India's credit worthiness, an unfavourable world scenario with its projected low income growth and increasing regionalism and a substantial loss in RPA trade (Former USSR and Post European countries) for India. India's hang-up with anti - market socialistic development strategies and people's shaken confidence arising from unsatisfactory sporadic liberalization attempts since 1990. The existence of a large but inefficient public sector with its own vested interest.

All these, in the light of inter-country experiences, Forewarn of a longer gestation period with heavy social costs and raise doubts as to the tolerance level of Indian society for withstanding such less impending social cost.

However, there are plus points: The liberalization package is preceded by the minimum essential political setup: India's democratic form of society. In the transformation of economy into a highly efficient one, moving towards a market economy, India can benefit from her past experience of a mixed economy. Indeed, this places India on a better footing vis-a-vis China, East Europe and other centrally planned economies. India has a very good track record of fulfilling international commitments, with a comparatively low debt service ratio compared to Latin American and some of the African countries. India has a large supply of skilled manpower and cheap labour. India has a reasonably good basic infrastructure. ‘

It is against this backdrop, that India's stabilization measures should be assessed. In the short run, it has fulfilled the specific stabilization objectives i.e., reducing the balance of payments and the budgetary gaps and recouping all the losses in the foreign exchange reserves. However, a word of caution is needed, from the experience of other countries it has been observed that a short-term success in the stabilization phase often tempts policy-makers to sit back and prolong the phase of stabilization process. In a number of cases this has led to stagflation. The continuance with too high a foreign reserve ratio (as in India) against a heavy import compression requires a warning. Indeed, a large part of the present problem is due to India's lack of proper foreign exchange reserve management. This warning is specially needed when stabilization is achieved through soft option (import and expenditure compressions and heavy foreign exchange borrowings) regardless of the needs for growth and productivity (as observed in number of other countries). This may retard and render difficult the desired transition to growth. To avoid this, the adjustment process could be slowed down if necessary, specially in certain areas of reform (for example, the rate of decline in the budget deficit as percentage of GDP). The therapeutic approach of a shock treatment in the reform process may not work in India.

As observed in the case of other countries, a structural adjustment process is much more complex than the stabilization process and therefore should not be left only with the bureaucrats and politicians. There is no standard recipe for the structural adjustment phase. Although there is a far degree of commonality in the stabilization phase. In choosing proper sequencing a very strong financial and banking infrastructure is a pre-requisite to establishing appropriate market codes of conduct. Therefore financial liberalization should not be postponed for too long. Moreover, in tune with the spirit of present economic reform, decisions on privatization and exit policy should follow early in the game. Although a high rate of inflation is a problem the key issue is to revamp the real growth of the economy by suitable investments and incentives. In the context of improving productivity and international competitiveness, technology improvement should be the buzz word. The attempts to reduce the costs exclusively through fiscal, monetary, financial and trade policies have their limits.

Ultimately, it is the technological progress which matters. Imports of technology via foreign direct investment should accordingly feature at the centre as a necessary condition for increasing efficiency. However, the absorption and indigenization of foreign technology alone will satisfy the requisite condition for success. This will be made possible by the growth of research and development in the domestic economy. Reforms, therefore the research and development policy, must provide a clear strategy and sufficient resources.

To conclude, when Liberalization reforms were initiated the economy was suffering with the heavy foreign exchange constraints and import compression and a relatively unfavourable international scenario but India will have to go through a painful prolonged period of adjustment. Thus, the country must prepare itself to meet this challenge by first protecting the poor and second by protecting the infrastructure and human development needs.

Topic: What have we gained from our democratic set-up?

Democracy is a form of government which is for the people, by the people and of the people. Here people hold power directly or through elected representatives. Modern democracy was evolved out of demand for equality politically, legally, socially and economically. As India gained independence in 1947 she started planning her own future with the constituent Assembly adopting the new constitution of India on 26th January 1950. Then came into being the concern for shaping up her future. The first step in this direction was the introduction of the planning programmes that would continue till future. The first five year plan came into force in 1951. The hurdles in the way were numerous. There was resentment and aggression from the neighbours Pakistan, China etc were out in the field in the form of Partition etc. the time was marked with conflicts with and within India.

Every feature that marks up a democratic set-up will belong to this new system also but these are the elections and their results, not the service and the satisfaction and the plum posts and perks, not the sense of achievement that seek to gain the center stage in this system. This system hovers around highfalutin celebrations but seeks to devour the reasons for these celebrations. Even with celebrations fast on our heels a large swathe of population remains indifferent and skeptical of the outcome.

Every humanized democracy paces ahead with its head aloft with dignity and eyes warm and anchored in vision deriving its power from the sturdiness of spine of election and vim of legs of sense of service and power of motivation. The two hands of justice and equality wave only in tandem with the pace of legs. So while spine carries the whole body together, individually these are the different limbs that do the quotidian work and help the body live its full existence to leverage its very being and ambiance it happens to be in. The idea of equality, especially economic one is a chimera but civil equality i.e. the societal deference for every work and modus Vivendi that fits in the ethical framework of liberal intellectual minds ranging from past to present is achievable.

The Indian government was headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who was a great visionary and had set a vision for India. The principles of panchsheel were given out in January 1954 which formed the basis of non-alignment policy and and India started a league of its own. It was agreed

that no no-aligned country could enter into a defence treaty with any country in the context of superpower rivalry. It gave the country a boost and she was able to fight against all evils of the time and went on with its preaching's.

After setting her foreign policies she now turned towards the problems of the home. Caste system, agrarian class structure, multiplicity of religions and many other obstacles on the way she had to reformulate the objectives of the policies. The new policies would have to be at par with the foreigners, our age old culture and also the modern era to come. The foreign effect was the result of the long rule of the Britishers which agitated the youth to go against the orthodox ways of living. On one hand there was rejection and criticism of the new policies whereas on the other it was that the youth were also encouraging widow remarriages, women education, abolition of untouchability etc. India did not accept this transformation from sanskritisation to westernization with ease as there was a diversity in her cultures rather adopted a secular outlook which preaches equality in religions.

Next came the planning phase for making her industrially stable by tackling issues from every aspect of society. This effort led to urbanization which offered a new lease of life to the rural class who could now experience the city life and earn their living too. This step on the negative side resulted in pressure in the urban areas concerning living conditions, environmental conditions. People were made to understand the importance of literacy and promoted universal and free education, adult education etc. Later correspondence education emerged as a gift for the class of people who were not able to attend regular classes for any personal problems. The motto of 'Learn while you earn' was showing on the face of India now but were still waiting a huge box of problems of suicides, crimes, drugs, juvenile delinquency, sex vices, dowry crimes, poverty, unemployment etc to name a few. The sense of being a global citizen has come to every citizen now when even language barriers are crossed as same languages are spoken around the continents and westernization has broadened the horizon. Even today natural calamities like floods, cyclones etc may delay but not retard India's progress. On the nuclear front India ranks amongst the topmost. With all this we must feel proud of our democracy. The party feuds, frequent elections and terrorism are general and cannot hinder the nation's growth. We have proved almost at par to the developed nations of the world in all aspects. We have achieved more than we have thought of 60 years back.

If it is democracy it has to be only sane; prone to headache, fault lines and fits but capable of raising the bar and achieving the highest standards possible, being in sound health and rearing greatest disquisition provided measures to this effect are in place. A democratic system never guarantees an absolute Right; for that to happen we will have to revert back to righteous

monarchy but makes sure that every crepuscular Wrongs is set right to the maximum push-able degree. Hence a democratic setup aims to have an ideal happy society at its core even at the expanse of a very successful one in riches. When looked at from this view democracy paves the way for the concepts of equity and equality. This equality further can have myriad aspects to be explored but the rudimentary seeds when watered with the civil justness give rise to the tree of highest possible esteem having branches touching every section of the society. The trunk of this tree is rooted in the capital of the nation and hence the soil of the capital will have crucial bearings on the health of the tree. More healthy and green will it be better the all encompassing shadow. This esteem is nothing but a link between the democracy and those who are being democratized by an official decree that in all senses is also a granting of consent on the part of its subjects. But still even as pious and righteous a system as democracy may be, like any other system of governance democracy too does cleave society into two parts.

The sanctity of the democracy can be gauged by which one comes first and which second. If people think they come first not their representatives then it is assertive democracy which is good but not great. A large measure of this democracy is contingent upon the intellectual level of people which broadly and quite curiously is nothing but a reflection of their representatives. Thereby much more than this assertiveness which works as a healthy dose for any democracy to grow it is the nature of assertion that determines the direction the democracy will venture into. If representatives position themselves after people it is nothing short of a utopia though along with its own share of fault lines. At the most any society can hope for bouts of these utopian moments for it is not easy to fill the lacunas and chinks in an democracy owing to its being so open and at the same time hostage to the world economic and social order. In third case if people are too acquiescent and toady and representatives too royal and dominant than democracy appears making way for another system which wears the same clothes but gives account of a different disposition. This is psephocracy.

Now imagine we have a body with only spine and no limbs. Democracy too looks same when elections and alliances come to become the be all and end all of a democratic set-up. To get finer perspective we can also equate this state of democracy with the mental setup of a student aiming to crack an entrance examination on account of whatever he could cram in a fortnight before the exam. His buoying through the exam is bound to be proved disastrous in the long run for both candidate himself and the environment he will inhabit. Invariably conflicts will arise thanks to lack of loyalty and dedication to the environment. These very innocuous looking conflicts take on dire consequences when the desire to have a sense of purpose slips in one’s life. This conflict when engendered in political arena which even empirically is all about social service exerts undue influence on entire nation and more importantly on the very definition of service. Every so

Often we see the manifestations of these conflicts when we bear witness to a politician utterly naked in his avariciousness. It is not the welfare of the society which forms the crux of a polity outwardly steeped in democracy but the greed that drives his actions and deeds. Corruption which like a waterfall falls forms top to bottom not other way round is nothing but just one offshoot of this conflict. When the conflicting position of a candidate whose cramming planted him at the wrong place in the system leads to uncharitable ways then the challenges another candidate who sought to cheat his way into the superficial but personally favorable result poses to the idea of democracy can easily be imagined.

Marxist revolutionary, Che Guevara had once said, 'Democracy cannot consist solely of elections that are nearly always fictitious and managed by rich landowners and professional politicians.'

What Che Guevara had said stands true today. This truth takes on even more dangerous form when a large percentage of voters happen to be either illiterate or semi literate. Because democracy allows every single citizen to have his say it all boils down to the characteristics of the majority. If majority is quiescent and inert then democracy will be nothing but a passive one. The choice of the representatives will not be governed by work done by the candidates in the interest of the society, ideological leanings, and election manifestoes but by personal factors. This results in whetting up those very ills which a democratic society in all its fairness stands to fight. This weakness also have lead to criminalization of politics or as often people say politicization of criminals thanks to their election winning abilities. If a person convicted in any case other than political wins an election then it points to huge chinks in our democratic structure that needs to be dealt with greatest immediacy. A politician who in any democracy could have been a bulwark against societal ills becomes the fountain and patron of these ills instead. Worse still not only does he nurture ills and diseases but like a virus also resists the attempts at every medication and often, unfortunately even defeats them. That leaves democracy with the plight of a tamed animal tied to the peg of election rather than the liberty of a human being bound to his roots but free to roam, learn and serve.

For a democracy to be true to its definition and purpose not only do we need only party manifestoes but also strong ideological divide in the society instead of class or caste or religious divide. While caste divide abets regionalization and deigns the administration it is lopsided class divide that results in huge gaps in earnings and as we have often seen in the history it leads to frustration and even revolutions. The sad truth about revolutions that sometimes they are nothing but just a divergence leading to a path seedier than the prevailing stands even today. So far as religious divide's ramifications are to be said not only distant but even very recent history has evinced the venom they can spill into the vessel of the society and ghettoisations they can lead

to. An ideological divide, on the other hand, often ends up as a precursor to the constructive debate in the society. That brings us to the gospel truth that debates are the leashes which a democracy should use to prevent its cart from running astray and ride smooth.

If people belonging to educated or even elite class can indulge in such medieval and barbarian acts with what hope we expect people living in the recesses of poverty, gloom and darkness of illiteracy to give account of moralistic values. Isn't it incumbent upon all of us that we call into question our own comportments and those who helm our democratic set-up? Some might want to dismiss these incidents as stray and aberrations but when acutely observed over a period of time only the thinly reported incidents even from the metros are enough to sicken us let alone digging deeper into the dark lanes of hinterland where often law faces the scimitar on the altar of ignorance or insularity. Not only our politicians but we all stand guilty of reducing a system passed onto us by our forefathers to a mere formality. If we and especially those whose job entails this don't squirm at the sight of a bare feet emaciated boy walking in the excruciating heat or shivering cold or a women splashing contaminated water off her body in the public or a child in an English medium public school using cuss words and expletives at the age of eight then it is not the slow pace of lumbering democracy but the fast pace of the vehicles of governors of democracy and a lack of community-hood that stands reprehensible. Democracy may be just a political system of governance but it is humanity that propelled it to come into being. Without humanity democracy is just a body shaking but not moving and alive but not growing. It is imperative on our part that if we pretend to care for democracy we should also care for what I hold as nothing short of temple: primary schools among other things. Unfortunately the primary schools which give the child the first embrace of his life outside his mother are too clumsy and repulsive. The beginning gets as worse as it could get. It goes without saying that often it is none but democracy that bears the brunt of an adulthood grown out of uncomfortable or absent embraces.

This all having been said still we have some reasons to take pride in whatever muddling we have done through last six decades. Not only have we succeeded in preventing the fabric of democracy from ripping apart completely but have a system which needs overhauling, rectification and makeover but is indispensable. As the elections for 15th Lok Sabha draw near once again we will get to see this festival of democracy being celebrated across the India. I hope soon we will realize that election is a question fundamentally tied to the spirit of democracy asking us the basic tenets of a democracy. That is how it reminds us of the answers we have to look for. Though answer of the ballot will determine only the fate of the symbol that represents the question it is the debate about what could or should have been the answer or who the

answerer is or what does the symbol represent and more importantly what our answer is will determine the flowering or wilting of democratic values.

India is an interesting example of how a third world country without having the credentials, which the successful democracies of the first world possess, managed to institutionalize a viable form of democracy. India owes its success in maintaining a democratic setup to many factors but I would like to focus on the way how federalism and gradual decentralization were managed in India so that most of the minorities' i.e. religious, ethnic and regional ones were kept satisfied. In my view it is not ethnicity itself which is an obstacle in establishing democratic systems in third world countries, but the state structure from within which it tends to originate and is then managed later on. In this case India has countered these divergent ethnic forces by keeping a fine balance in its policies while accommodating the various interest groups during the last 5 decades.

India democracy in its initial phase was aided by the fact that after independence it did not have to face a very volatile political society. Mainstream Politics like before partition was dominated by the northern states that is mainly Uttar Pradesh which was the power base for the Congress party. Furthermore political conflict on regional basis was usually restricted to demand for greater sharing of power and resources between the centre and the regional elites. This was in most cases handled very amicably by the Nehru administration by creating a federal system that was quite accommodating to the demands of these regional elites. Another reason why these regional conflicts did not blow out of proportion was that most of these demands had only the backing of the regional elites rather then having any mass movement behind them. Since these regional elites were more interested in power sharing the Initial Congress Governments managed to keep the political heterogeneity of the Country from hindering the development of its democracy by gradually granting some political autonomy to the constituent assemblies of the provinces. These demands of the regional elites calling for more autonomy were carefully analyzed and in quite a few cases were rejected as well but enough were conceded to show a tendency towards decentralization.

In the last decade much criticism has been targeted at India for being centralized and that its much touted "democratic federalism" has been corrupted to a great extent. The recent policy of the nationalist and ethnically based parties "to manipulate" communal divisions among linguistic minorities is not appreciated at all either but the fact that democracy depends upon more than just the practices of political parties is over looked. The success of the Indian democratic system is a result of the whole institutional framework around the political sphere which has evolved over the years and how ethnically diverse forces have shaped that process. India's democracy now has an institutional framework which is quite expansive in its approach and its multi-tiered—national

parliament and government, state (province) parliaments and governments, each with its panoply of institutions, down to the municipal and village- council levels are perfectly suitable for such a vast and diverse country.

Topic: The Game of Politics

Politics is a game in the true spirit. It has two or more parties contesting each other, each being equally dedicated to win. Each maintains a team, whether close knit or not may be circumstantial, and has a lot in stake. Like any other game it has not only the player taking interest but also a large audience to watch its every minute movement, cheer its wins and boo its losses. It has its own set of supporters, who may however be divided on their favourites from the team. Any game requires a balance of the mind or the physique or both and politics requires both. One has to not only have a sharp mind but be also physically resilient enough to fight elections, do campaigns on a day and night basis, listen to a thousand voices at the same time and so on. Just as in any sports, the match or game may last for a short while but the preparations go on for months or even lifetimes. Practice makes a perfect sportsperson and so also practice makes a mature politician. Any sport lasts or is popular till people have interest in it, and politics scores very well in this front. People are addicted to politics and there is no drawing room where heated discussions over politics have not taken place. It is in acknowledgement of this fact that the media today focuses mainly on politics, relegating everything else to the background.

But is this phenomenon new? Is it a product of the modern age? Certainly not, politics seems to run in mankind's blood. Man being a more intelligent species realized early on that everything does not work on brawn. He realized that if you did the right thing, things would come to you without even moving you limbs. He realized that it was not always necessary to tackle others physically, a sweet word or gesture here and another there was more powerful than his muscles. Man is very much a social animal and has always craved for societal acceptance and praise and later status. This is from where politics was born. As man's physical necessities came to be easily achieved, he looked up to do greater things, to organize himself and others into families, groups and societies. And it was in this organizing that he first realized the potentials of playing the game of politics. Simple societies played a simple form of politics but as society became more complex their games became more complex. Small groups gave way to full fledged kingdoms and states and each of these massive societies had their own political ideas and ideals, the matter of running the state in an appropriate manner came to be known as politics. This however did not mean the end of politics in other spheres of life. Theories on political thought and process began to be discussed, and a new era in politics came about.

The institutions and customs and political ideas of the ancient civilizations grew up slowly, age by age, no man designing and no man foreseeing. It was only in the sixth century B.C., that men began to think clearly about their relations to one another, and first to question and first propose to alter and rearrange the established beliefs and laws and methods of human government. The Greek philosopher Aristotle, who studied at Plato's academy, is generally regarded as the founder of the scientific approach to political theory. His Politics, which classified governments as monarchies, aristocracies, and democracies, according to their control by one person, a select few or many persons, successfully combined an empirical investigation of the facts and a critical enquiry into their ideal possibilities, thus providing a challenging model of political studies.

We often ideally think that democracy is about taking the political equality of all citizens seriously. It's about giving them an equal voice and vote, encouraging them to participate, allowing their views to be fairly represented, and facilitating an open and respectful dialogue in the search for the best solutions to the collective problems of society. In reality, democratic politics are not that pretty. "Adversarial" might not be the first word that pops into our minds when we think of democracy in the US, but maybe it should be. The electoral system in the United States is fundamentally adversarial in nature: parties and candidates are encouraged to play to win. The glorious intellectual dawn of Greece and Alexandria however did not last long, as the slave-holding civilizations collapsed and the clouds of religious intolerance and absolutist government darkened the promise of that beginning. The light of fearless thinking did not break through the European obscurity again effectually until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Meanwhile the Arabs and Mongols had also put together some kind of a political structure. And just as in Greece the bold speculations of Plato came before Aristotle's hard search for fact, so in Europe the first political inquiries of the new phase were put in the form of "Utopian" stories, directly imitated from Plato's Republic and his Laws. Sir Thomas More's Utopia is a curious imitation of Plato that bore fruit in a new English poor law.

Indian political thought too seems to have matured early. We hear of 'Ram Rajya' in prehistoric times. The panchayat system too seems to have been in place very long ago. The earliest written evidence comes in the form of the 'Arthashastra' by Kautilya. The title, Arthashastra, which means "the Science of Material Gain" or "Science of Polity", does not leave any doubts about its ends. According to Kautilya, the ruler should use any means to attain his goal and his actions required no moral sanction. The only problems discussed are of the most practical kind. Though the kings were allowed a free rein, the citizens were subject to a rigid set of rules. It remains unique in all of Indian literature because of its total absence of specious reasoning, or its unabashed advocacy of real-politik, and scholars continued to study it for its clear cut arguments and formal prose till the twelfth century. Espionage and the liberal use of provocative agents is

recommended on a large scale. Murder and false accusations were to be used by a king's secret agents without any thoughts to morals or ethics. There are chapters for kings to help them keep in check the premature ambitions of their sons, and likewise chapters intended to help princes to thwart their fathers' domineering authority. However, Kautilya ruefully admits that it is just as difficult to detect an official's dishonesty as it is to discover how much water is drunk by the swimming fish.

Politics and political thought has come a long way since and is no longer limited by states and territories alone, the politics of today has global implications and is of interest to both the intellectual and the common man. The wave of a general globalization of things could definitely not have overlooked the most important aspect of man as a social being. In these times everything is global and local politics is invariably linked to world politics. The game of politics is played as passionately and as meticulously in any part of the world. Theories do not alone suffice one to become a good politician. One has to live through the twist and turns of a political career. Maturity obviously comes with time. The real-politik still continues though in a more subtle manner but its vicious inclinations remain the same. Today's politician has less conscience and more greed for power as well as money and will go to any extent to reach his goals, even if he has to declare war and walk over the bodies of the thousands that die as a result.

Like any other game politics too has some rules but they are rather flexible and the rules of the game keep changing as and when desired depending on who carries how much weight. The attack on Iraq is a case in point, the rule says UN sanction is required for any attack of the kind that is now going on in Iraq, but America being the sole superpower and having the support of another global power, namely Britain, has flouted this convention. Not many have openly opposed this, because even millenniums down the line, might is right, only physical right has been replaced by political and economic might. America and Britain have their own political gains involved, even though they may mouth things like the common good of mankind. Even today, it is self service of the mighty as it was centuries ago. Terminology has changed but basics remain the same. Hunger for power and control drives man in all fields and it will continue to do so into eternity, only the modus operandi will change. Politics was there and will continue to be there even if it turns from global to universal or to even inter galactic. Just as man is a social animal so also is he a political one. This game will go on, and with renewed vigour through ages.

Topic: Relevance of National Rural Health Mission

Rural Health Care forms an integral part of the National Health Care System. Provision of Primary Health Care is the foundation of all rural health care Programmes. For developing vast public health infrastructure and human resources of the country, accelerating the socio-economic

development and attaining improved quality of life, the Primary health care is accepted as one of the main instruments of action. Thus, recognizing the importance of Health in the process of economic and social development and improving the quality of life of our citizens, the Government of India has launched the National Rural Health Mission to carry out necessary architectural correction in the basic health care delivery system. The Mission adopts a synergistic approach by relating health to determinants of good health viz. segments of nutrition, sanitation, hygiene and safe drinking water. It also aims at mainstreaming the Indian systems of medicine to facilitate health care.

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), a National effort at ensuring effective healthcare, especially to the poor and vulnerable sections of the society was launched (on 12th April, 2005 for a period of seven years (2005-2012)) throughout the Country with special focus on 18 states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

The major objectives or National Rural Health Mission was to ensure the following issues:

- Development of Infrastructure of state governments
- Availability of critical manpower
- Reach of mobile medical vans
- Mainstreaming AYUSH (the Homeopathic and Ayurvedic doctors)
- Coordination with community by ASHA (trained female community health activist – ‘ASHA’ or Accredited Social Health Activist. Selected from the village itself and accountable to it, the ASHA will be trained to work as an interface between the community and the public health system).
- Implementation of MIS
- Implementation of public –private partnership
- Inter-sectoral coordination
- Appropriateness of expenditure planning
- Penetration of health insurance

The Purpose

The purpose of NRHM among other things was to strengthen the primary health centres (PHCs) and subcentres and creates a network of rural hospitals. However it was felt that several

developments since the launch of the NRHM in April 2005 point to increased privatization of health care services. For instance in several states the NRHM under the garb of better health management opened up space to outsourcing and privatization of PHCs and subcentres.

The Criticism

The NRHM is criticized for adopting a system of Indian Public Health Standards which was seen as having severe limitations. While it defined the minimum manpower requirement and the equipment and infrastructure needed to attain a set of well defined health outcomes the attempts to achieve these were not comprehensive in scope and were biased largely towards reproductive and child health. The IPHS was adopted for CHCs, PHCs and district hospitals as well. However the emphasis was still on purchasing equipment and attaining standards of infrastructure development rather than raising the level of overall service provision.

Implementation

The policy in some states of allowing public participation in the monitoring and administration of health care services also backfired. The Rogi Kalyan samities that were started with the intent of greater public participation in the health care system degenerated into a system of cost recovery with the introduction of user fee for many services in government hospitals. Donor agencies pushed for the user -fee system and this resulted in a reduction of state investment in the maintenance of health care facilities. The public participation has been trivialized: it translated into better access for the privileged and the politically powerful.
Urban health statistics revealed that in many states the key indicators such as urban infant mortality rate had remained stagnant or their trend had even reversed. The specific vulnerability of urban slum dwellers the lack of basic amenities and health services for them was an area yet to be addressed. The NRHM was formally empowered to cover urban slums but in reality the coverage was negligible. Whatever urban component was there in health care ,it was in the RCH plans in a limited manner.There was no equivalent plan to set up PHCs,CHCs or sub centres in urban areas.

Components

Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA)

The NRHM covers all the villages through village-based ”Accredited Social Health Activists” (ASHA) who would act as a link between the health centers and the villagers. One ASHA will be raised from every village or cluster of villages.

The ASHA would be trained to advise villagers about Sanitation, Hygiene, Contraception, and Immunization to provide Primary Medical Care for Diarrhea, Minor Injuries, and Fevers; and to escort patients to Medical Centers. They would also deliver Directly Observed Treatment Short

(DOTS) course for tuberculosis and oral rehydration; distribute folic acid tablets and chloroquine to patients and alert authorities to unusual outbreaks.
Although these ASHAs would be honorary volunteers, there is a provision to provide them with performance-based compensation for undertaking specific health or other social sector programmes with measurable outputs, thus promoting employment for these volunteers.

If rural women want counseling on important issues such as birth preparedness, importance of safe delivery, breastfeeding and complementary feeding, immunization, contraception and prevention of common infections including Reproductive Tract Infection/Sexually Transmitted Infection (RTIs/STIs) and care of the young child, they may contact the concerned ASHA who shall be happy to provide them with all relevant guidance and assistance. The general norm as decided under the Programme is 'One ASHA per 1000 population'. In tribal, hilly, desert areas the norm could be relaxed to one ASHA per habitation, dependant on workload etc.

Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)

Janani Surakha Yojana is another important component under NRHM. JSY is a centrally sponsored scheme to benefit pregnant women & certified poor families. The Government has introduced the Janani Suraksha Yojana to provide comprehensive medical care during pregnancy, child birth and postnatal care and thereby endeavour to improve the level of institutional deliveries in low performing states to reduce maternal mortality. The NRHM provides broad operational framework for the Health Sector. Suggestive guidelines have been issued on key interventions like institutional deliveries, immunization, preparation of District Action Plan as well as schemes including ASHA, JSY etc. The States have the flexibility to project operational modalities in their State Action Plans. It is envisaged that National Rural Health Mission shall be able to effectively improve the availability of and access to quality health care by people, especially for those residing in rural areas, the poor, women and children.

Other Steps

One of the remarkable steps taken under of NRHM is mainstreaming of AYUSH into the rural health system, and thereby, integration of practitioners of Indian System of Medicine with the existing Modern System of Medicine. Though, conceptually these sounds in rhythm, nonetheless, it is not free from threats. The mission is posting of one AYUSH doctor at each PHC in addition to an existing allopathic doctor. This raises concerns about the possibility that instead of practicing with their own skills, AYUSH doctors are complained to be over prescribing allopathic medicines, even antibiotics for early recovery of patients, without having the requisite knowledge or training which may result in calamity. Hence, it would be essential to make sure that the AYUSH physicians in PHCs are provided with the appropriate facilities,

infrastructure and medications support , so that they can carry out with the system of medicine they have been trained in with complete efficacy. Additionally, if AYUSH physicians are really need to prescribe some basic or emergency allopathic care in exigencies, then this should be an unambiguous pronouncement to be taken after appropriate consultation with concerned authorities and experts in the field, keeping all pros and cons into consideration. If AYUSH doctors are allowed to prescribe basic or life saving allopathic medicines, it would be crucial to train them properly in this direction. Thought should also be given on the motivational factors of an AYUSH doctor likely to work in a primarily allopathic set-up.

ASHA is working in a fantastic manner in terms of Janani Suraksha Yojana, sanitation and other responsibilities. However, in terms of promoting community- based health insurance ASHA is yet to go a long way. Participation in community financing schemes requires resources, i.e. time and money, which the most disadvantaged group in societies often does not possess. Donors and policy makers should hence be aware that it might be very difficult, even impossible, to reach the poorest part of the population when promoting participation in these kind of local organizations. In order to both promote these initiatives and lower the barriers of participation, well-targeted subsidies and a linkage to social funds is a possible solution. As one major objective of social funds is to finance investments benefiting the poor and, since in most parts it is the public sector, which administers social funds, such a support would also strengthen the linkage to more formalized health care systems.

This suggests that, further research is needed, how these schemes can be scaled up and replicated as well as how to link them to social risk management instruments, e.g. social funds to broaden the risk pool and increasing coverage rates. Future research should also address the question of how subsidies for the poorest in a community can be designed in order to preserve the incentives for a viable management of the schemes and to achieve optimal targeting. In addition, more research is needed on other promising measures to fight social exclusion in access to social protection in low income environments. Finally, we can say that there is an immense need for massive propaganda to develop consciousness among the people regarding the need for financing health care in context of high out-of-pocket expenses on health. If we can successfully use insurance in covering our health hazards, we might create headway in front of the entire Southeast Asia to come up with a solution to this formidable challenge to the society.

It is beyond any doubt that, the wealth of a country is judged by the health of its people. Worldwide, nations are seeking viable answers to the question of how to offer a health care system, which leads to universal access to health care for their citizens. Admittance of healthy living conditions and good quality health is not only fundamental rights for each and every Indian, but also crucial factor for socio-economic maturity of the nation. The country’s policy

towards health has been traditionally identified by the provision of primary healthcare as the states responsibility. The policy also encouraged the establishment of a countrywide, state-run primary care infrastructure. The role of the central government has been mainly limited to family welfare programmes and design of disease control programmes. The policy has remained silent on the role of the private sector in provision of medical care. Notwithstanding to this, the private medical care sectors have developed to meet the increasing demand for medical care services. Some isolated evidences of the community-based health care and its financing options have been reported, like Self Employed Women's Association in Gujarat, Yeswashini Trust in Karnataka, and ACCORD in Nilgiri district in Maharashtra. However, in absence of nationwide consensus, huge literacy or existence of extensive high quality health care network as Japan their success is limited only in the boundaries of the pioneering districts. Even the highly subsidized Universal Health Insurance Scheme announced by Government of India and administered by the Government-owned Insurance Companies has resulted in a serious market failure. From the Indian Health care system it can be concluded that the state uses a collaborative approach, which involves financial support, strategic planning, and health prioritizing legislation that involves the government, community leaders, and private and public health care professionals. It is to be mentioned that the State Governments largely comply with the Indian structure of rural health care system consisting of primary health centres, sub-centres, and community health centres for rural health care. NGOs working in health care front are hardly found. Nonetheless, the total physical infrastructure available for rural health care in the state is still inadequate relative to its requirement. Moreover, there exists a large disparity in the availability of health care infrastructure and work force between the urban and the rural areas. 84 % percent of hospitals in India are sited in urban areas, which only account for roughly 35% of the population (Ravi Duggal, 1995).

Nearly, 75 % of allopathic doctors are positioned in urban areas. In the State of India, the availability of the recognized medical practitioners in rural areas is only 27 per lakh population whereas is the urban area it is 155 per lakh population. The kind of lopsided distribution of medical professionals in India, with a trifling proportion of medical practitioners ready to work in rural areas, is at the heart of the poor health care system of rural areas. In fact, the lacunae of the India rural medical system have become apparent within the last decade as economics forced hospitals to run with inadequate infrastructural facilities in the hospital care system and reducing staff, thereby reducing clients' admittance to timely services. In fact, this kind of economical or political and social disparity across the population groups in a given society will naturally have a direct comportment on the health indicators. Nonetheless, if the infant and maternal mortality rates (IMR and MMR) can be considered as the most sensitive indicators of health of the society,

then the Indian statistics in this front is really alarming. Around 2.2 million infants die every year. Keeping this into consideration, the National Health Policy 1983 had set target to restrict the Infant Mortality Rate to less than 60 per 1000 live births. Nonetheless, this target is yet to be achieved. In the year 2000, the National Health Policy further targeted to reduce Maternal Mortality Rate to less than 200 per 100,000 live births. But, this target also has also not been achieved yet. Till date, according to the UNDP reports, on an average 407 mothers in India die due to pregnancy related causes, for every 100,000 live births. On the contrary, as per the three rounds of National Family Health Surveys, in the last decade Maternal Mortality Rate has further reached to 540 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.

ASHA plan conceived as an important component of NRHM was a let down due to de-emphasizing of the workers' curative and symptomatic roles and the piece rate system of payment .While the strategy of deploying ASHAs was plausible what had not been anticipated was the inability of the existing departmental structures to implement such a large scale mobilization and the absence of support structures. The implementation of the ASHA plan was poor. The NRHM was a compulsion to show the pro-poor face of the new government. It has been found during a study conducted by Jan Swasthya Abhiyan that most of the ASHAs had yet to start work; the Anganwadi worker or the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife allocated them work. Under the NRHM the ASHA was required to be accountable to the community and not subservient to the ANM or AWW.Dalit health workers were discriminated against. In MP nearly 50% of the PHCs surveyed were being managed by non medical staff, in Bihar 30%, in Rajasthan 25% and in Jharkhand 12%.The main problems plaguing PHCs related to improper drug supply and shortage of staff.

In many of the states the PHCs and even some of the CHCs had been contracted out to NGOs under the managed care approach. This system which is in vogue in Bihar, Karnataka and Arunchal Pradesh entailed the offering of a specified package of services. There is no notion of decentralization and community management. In Gujarat under the Chiranjeevi Programme private clinics are reimbursed at fixed rates for institutional deliveries and emergency obstetric care services. The government has also contracted out peripheral health facilities and has a proposal to contract out district hospitals to corporates. Some of the private health insurance schemes supported by state governments had failed. However in some states such as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal the partnership is working well. The core of the public health system stayed within the public domain and only some of the ancillary services were contracted out.

According to Jan Kalyan Abhiyan a vast network of government run health subcentres and PHCs supported by CHCs and district hospitals is required along with a large community -health-worker force, the expansion of nursing staff and the upgrading of their skills. The notion of

primary health care continues to be limited in that it is applied to RCH and a few disease control programmes.There is still reluctance to move towards the goal of comprehensive primary health care. The health policy is silent on is the need to set up a rational drug policy. All policies including NRHM had glossed over this aspect despite the fact that nearly 2/3 of all health costs go into drugs. There is no regulation of the prices of essential drugs whose list had been brought down to 30 in 2002 from 347 in 1977.

There has been lot of importance given to two vaccination initiatives-pulse polio and universal Hepatitis B vaccination. More than Rs 1000 crore is spent annually on the pulse polio programme while the budget for other vaccines in the National Immunization Programme in 2005-06 was only Rs 327 crore. The objectives of any health policy have to be seen in the light of the Alma Ata declaration where health was not just a desired goal but one of the main harbingers of equity in society. The government's intent in bringing changes to the health care system may be good but their implementation seems to be directed by donor directed priorities.

Conclusion

It needs hardly any mention that health care in the rural India is the responsibility of the community as a whole. A collaborative approach, which involves financial support, strategic planning, and health prioritizing legislation involves the government, community leaders, and private and public health care professionals is highly essential, as mentioned in the introduction part. Faults of the Indian rural health care system, these days have become so much apparent within the last decade as economics forced hospitals to run with inadequate infrastructure facilities in the hospital care system and reducing staff, thereby reducing patients' access to timely services.

Topic: FDI in Retail: To be or Not To be

The Union cabinet approved 51 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in multi-brand retail. The Cabinet also decided to raise the cap on foreign investment in single-brand retailing to 100 per cent from 51 per cent. An estimated Rs 30-lakh-crore retail sector was thus opened to foreign investors by clearing a bill that allows 51 per cent investment in multi-brand retail.The decision being perceived as game-changer for the estimated USD 590 billion (Rs 29.50 lakh crore) retail market was taken at the meeting of the Cabinet presided over by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. India currently allows 51 percent foreign investment in single-brand retailers and 100 percent for wholesale operations but no FDI in multi-brand retail. The major provisions for FDI investment include that the minimum investment will have to be $100 million. Retail stores will only be allowed in cities with more than one million people. Also it will be mandatory for retailers to source a minimum 30 per cent of the value of manufactured goods, barring food

products, from small and medium enterprises. Investment up to 50 per cent will have to be in storage and back-end infrastructure. India being a signatory to World Trade Organisation's General Agreement on Trade in Services, which include wholesale and retailing services, had to open up the retail trade sector to foreign investment. There were initial reservations towards opening up of retail sector arising from fear of job losses, procurement from international market, competition and loss of entrepreneurial opportunities. FDI in cash and carry or wholesale trade, was allowed way back in 1997 during the United Front Government. Foreign investment of up to 51 per cent in single brand retailing came to India in January 2006. The Union government further asserted that 30 per cent sourcing under FDI in multi-brand retail has been made mandatory from Indian MSEs only. The government highlighted that the 30 per cent obligation before the global players is limited to India. The government's explanation came amidst protests from the opposition and the micro and small enterprises (MSEs).According to government's previous stand, the overseas players have to do 30 per cent of their sourcing from MSEs which, however, can be done from anywhere in the world and is not India-specific. The only condition placed was that these MSEs must not have more than $1 million [Rs.5 crore] investment in plant and machinery.

In 2004, The High Court of Delhi defined the term 'retail' as a sale for final consumption in contrast to a sale for further sale or processing (i.e. wholesale), A sale to the ultimate consumer. Thus, retailing can be said to be the interface between the producer and the individual consumer buying for personal consumption. This excludes direct interface between the manufacturer and institutional buyers such as the government and other bulk customers Retailing is the last link that connects the individual consumer with the manufacturing and distribution chain. A retailer is involved in the act of selling goods to the individual consumer at a margin of profit. The retail industry is mainly divided into:- 1) Organised and 2) Unorganised Retailing Organised retailing refers to trading activities undertaken by licensed retailers, that is, those who are registered for sales tax, income tax, etc. These include the corporate-backed hypermarkets and retail chains, and also the privately owned large retail businesses. Unorganised retailing, on the other hand, refers to the traditional formats of low-cost retailing, for example, the local kirana shops, owner manned general stores, paan/beedi shops, convenience stores, hand cart and pavement vendors, etc. The Indian retail sector is highly fragmented with 97 per cent of its business being run by the unorganized retailers. The organized retail however is at a very nascent stage. The sector is the largest source of employment after agriculture, and has deep penetration into rural India generating more than 10 per cent of India's GDP. For those brands which adopt the franchising route as a matter of policy, the current FDI Policy will not make any difference. They would have preferred that the Government liberalize rules for maximizing their royalty and franchise

fees. They must still rely on innovative structuring of franchise arrangements to maximize their returns. Consumer durable majors such as LG and Samsung, which have exclusive franchisee owned stores, are unlikely to shift from the preferred route right away. For those companies which choose to adopt the route of 51% partnership, they must tie up with a local partner. The key is finding a partner which is reliable and who can also teach a trick or two about the domestic market and the Indian consumer.

Positive Aspects

FDI can be a powerful catalyst to spur competition in the retail industry, due to the current scenario of low competition and poor productivity. The policy of single-brand retail was adopted to allow Indian consumers access to foreign brands. Since Indians spend a lot of money shopping abroad, this policy enables them to spend the same money on the same goods in India. FDI in single-brand retailing was permitted in 2006, up to 51 per cent of ownership. Between then and May 2010, a total of 94 proposals have been received. Of these, 57 proposals have been approved. An FDI inflow of US$196.46 million under the category of single brand retailing was received between April 2006 and September 2010, comprising 0.16 per cent of the total FDI inflows during the period. Retail stocks rose by as much as 5%. Shares of Pantaloon Retail (India) Ltd ended 4.84% up at Rs 441 on the Bombay Stock Exchange. Shares of Shopper's Stop Ltd rose 2.02% and Trent Ltd, 3.19%. The exchange's key index rose 173.04 points, or 0.99%, to 17,614.48. But this is very less as compared to what it would have been had FDI upto 100% been allowed in India for single brand. The policy of allowing 100% FDI in single brand retail can benefit both the foreign retailer and the Indian partner – foreign players get local market knowledge, while Indian companies can access global best management practices, designs and technological knowhow. By partially opening this sector, the government was able to reduce the pressure from its trading partners in bilateral/ multilateral negotiations and could demonstrate India's intentions in liberalising this sector in a phased manner.

Permitting foreign investment in food-based retailing is likely to ensure adequate flow of capital into the country & its productive use, in a manner likely to promote the welfare of all sections of society, particularly farmers and consumers. It would also help bring about improvements in farmer income & agricultural growth and assist in lowering consumer prices inflation. Apart from this, by allowing FDI in retail trade, India will significantly flourish in terms of quality standards and consumer expectations, since the inflow of FDI in retail sector is bound to pull up the quality standards and cost-competitiveness of Indian producers in all the segments. It is therefore obvious that we should not only permit but encourage FDI in retail trade.Lastly, it is to

be noted that the Indian Council of Research in International Economic Relations (ICRIER), a premier economic think tank of the country, which was appointed to look into the impact of BIG capital in the retail sector, has projected the worth of Indian retail sector to reach $496 billion by 2011-12 and ICRIER has also come to conclusion that investment of 'big' money (large corporates and FDI) in the retail sector would in the long run not harm interests of small, traditional, retailers. In light of the above, it can be safely concluded that allowing healthy FDI in the retail sector would not only lead to a substantial surge in the country's GDP and overall economic development, but would inter alia also help in integrating the Indian retail market with that of the global retail market in addition to providing not just employment but a better paying employment, which the unorganized sector (kirana and other small time retailing shops) have undoubtedly failed to provide to the masses employed in them.

Concerns

It is feared that, it would lead to unfair competition and ultimately result in large-scale exit of domestic retailers, especially the small family managed outlets, leading to large scale displacement of persons employed in the retail sector. Further, as the manufacturing sector has not been growing fast enough, the persons displaced from the retail sector would not be absorbed there. Another concern is that the Indian retail sector, particularly organized retail, is still under-developed and in a nascent stage and that, therefore, it is important that the domestic retail sector is allowed to grow and consolidate first, before opening this sector to foreign investors. Antagonists of FDI in retail sector oppose the same on various grounds, like, that the entry of large global retailers such as Wal-Mart would kill local shops and millions of jobs, since the unorganized retail sector employs an enormous percentage of Indian population after the agriculture sector; secondly that the global retailers would conspire and exercise monopolistic power to raise prices and monopolistic (big buying) power to reduce the prices received by the suppliers; thirdly, it would lead to asymmetrical growth in cities, causing discontent and social tension elsewhere. Hence, both the consumers and the suppliers would lose, while the profit margins of such retail chains would go up.

Argument that only foreign players can create the supply chain for farm produce is bogus. International retail players have no role in building roads or generating power. They are only required to create storage facilities and cold chains. This could be done by governments in India. Move will lead to large-scale job losses. International experience shows supermarkets invariably displace small retailers. Small retail has virtually been wiped out in developed countries like the US and in Europe. South East Asian countries had to impose stringent zoning and licensing regulations to restrict growth of supermarkets after small retailers were getting displaced.

Fragmented markets give larger options to consumers. Consolidated markets make the consumer captive. Allowing foreign players with deep pockets leads to consolidation. International retail does not create additional markets, it merely displaces existing markets. India has the highest shopping density in the world with 11 shops per 1,000 people. It has 1.2 crore shops employing over 4 crore people; 95% of these are small shops run by self-employed people. Global retail giants will resort to predatory pricing to create monopoly/oligopoly. This can result in essentials, including food supplies, being controlled by foreign organizations. Jobs in the manufacturing sector will be lost because structured international retail makes purchases internationally and not from domestic sources. This has been the experience of most countries which have allowed FDI in retail. Comparison between India and China is misplaced. China is predominantly a manufacturing economy. It's the largest supplier to Wal-Mart and other international majors. It obviously cannot say no to these chains opening stores in China when it is a global supplier to them. India in contrast will lose both manufacturing and services jobs.

Conclusion

Conclusively we can say that FDI in retail has the both positive as well as negative aspects of it ,but what we should consider before jumping on any conclusion that fears of small shopkeepers getting displaced are vastly exaggerated. When domestic majors were allowed to invest in retail, both supermarket chains and neighbourhood pop-and-mom stores coexisted. If anything, the entry of retail big boys is likely to hot up competition, giving consumers a better deal, both in prices and choices. Mega retail chains need to keep price points low and attractive - that's the USP of their business.

This is done by smart procurement and inventory management: Good practices from which Indian retail can also learn. The argument that farmers will suffer once global retail has developed a virtual monopoly is also weak. To begin with, it's very unlikely that global retail will ever become monopolies. Stores like Wal-Mart or Tesco are by definition few, on the outskirts of cities (to keep real estate costs low), and can't intrude into the territory of local kiranas. So, they can not eat up their share of pie. Secondly, it can't be anyone's case that farmers are getting a good deal right now. The fact is that farmers barely subsist while middlemen take the cream. Let's not get dreamy about this unequal relationship.

Topic: Historic Depreciation of Indian Rupee

Indian Rupee breached the Rs 55 per dollar mark and closed at 56 on 30th May, 2012 - its weakest since May 14, 2009. Most forex dealers In Mumbai during the week predicted that in the absence of any positive news, the rupee could soon touch the 60 mark against the dollar. From an investors' perspective, the movement of rupee may not matter much as only a few can figure out

that unlike Sensex, the rupee going up is not positive news, but on the contrary, it actually means rupee is becoming weaker. Many wrongly think that if rupee goes up it is something good for them not realising when the Indian currency depreciates against any foreign currency it has many negative impacts from the economic point of view. Due to Risk Aversion on the part of Currency Investors, the Demand for the US Dollar has gone up world over. Uncertain Economic Situation around the globe is another reason. FII's turning Net-Sellers and withdrawing funds from the Indian Market. The concept of Risk Aversion is the same irrespective of what timeframe you are talking about. But, the current situation is much more riskier & pronounced than what was in 2007-08. Back then, the problem was localized to debt problems (loans & mortgages) in USA and had only a ripple effect across the globe. Right now, the problem is more profound and markets world-over are in a crisis and some countries are on the verge of Default. So, people are much more risk averse than what they were in 2008 and hence the situation is much worse than during the mortgage economic crisis.

The RBI has maintained strong foreign exchange reserves, to the tune of US $ 350 billion as at March-end (with foreign currency assets accounting for about 90% of these reserves). However, it has refrained from (and has neither indicated in near-future) direct intervention in the forex market to curtail the depreciation of the rupee until now. Assuming that global uncertainty continues to prevail, exports growth is maintained and capital outflows persist, it is expected that this depreciation would continue. A worsening in any of the above variable would aggravate rupee depreciation. Historically, the Indian Rupee has been depreciating roughly in line with the fall in its Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) since the early 1980s. While the PPP was 15 around 1982, the actual exchange rate was Rs 9.30 per US Dollar. It is the inflation that negatively impacts PPP and pushes a currency down. But the present spike was rather sharp on the back of debt default concern in the euro zone and after the downgrading of two largest French banks, besides Lloyds Insurance withdrawing its deposits from European banks have led to euro losing its value against dollar. As large banks, investors and financial institutions started selling euro and bought dollar, the latter appreciated against all major currencies including rupee.

The main driver of rupee depreciation in the last three months has been the withdrawal of funds by foreign institutional investors (FIIs) from domestic economy. The rather pessimistic view of FIIs is being governed by global developments. The ongoing Euro-zone debt crisis seems to be intensifying and rescue packages have been of limited assistance in truly resolving the crisis. While the risk of sovereign default by individual Euro states is a concern, the risk of an impending contagion is also significant. The scenario in the US does not provide an upbeat

picture either. Delays in policy formulation on the setting of debt ceiling for the state have reflected some lacunae in management of government finances. The real estate problem, weakening local governme nt finances, lack of transparency in operations and systems of the government and deterioration the assets of the banking system observed in the Chinese economy are further drags to the global macro-economic outlook for the coming months. Domestic macro-economic prospects as well are weighed by high inflation and sagging industrial production, which have led to downward revision of growth estimates to just 7.6% for FY12.
Consequently, FIIs have withdrawn funds from emerging markets and invested back in the dollar which has been strengthening.

When a currency loses its value it creates many problems for the economy. It leads to high inflation, as India imports around 70 per cent of its crude oil requirement and the government will have to pay more for it in rupee terms. Due to the control on oil prices, the government may not easily pass the increased prices to the consumers. Further, this higher import bill will lead to rise in fiscal deficit for the government and will push the inflation, which is already hovering around the double-digit mark. Individually, traveling abroad becomes more expensive as travel cost can go up by at least 10 per cent. Students studying abroad too will be hit as more rupee will go out to pay for the courses and stay. Depreciation of rupee also affects the money flow in the Indian stock markets. FIIs, the main investors in the Indian equity markets, also start withdrawing their investments from the markets fearing loss of value. In terms of portfolios, if you hold stocks in oil and gas, infrastructure, fertiliser or tyre business, your returns will take a hit as the shares of these companies will fall when the rupee falls as they procure their raw materials from abroad. On the other hand stocks of Information Technology (IT) companies and export-oriented units should do better.

A falling rupee will make oil imports costlier, again increasing pressure on oil retailers to hike prices of at least de-regulated fuel like petrol.
Depreciation of the local currency naturally manifests in higher import costs for the domestic economy. Assuming that both imports and exports maintain their current growth rates through the year, higher import costs would widen the trade and current account deficit of the country. Commodities prices that are internationally denominated in US dollars would naturally be priced higher on the back of a stronger Dollar. The fiscal deficit for FY12 was budgeted at 4.6% of GDP in February, with the price of oil pegged at US $ 100 per barrel. Throughout FY12 so far, however, the price of oil has been well above this reference rate, hovering at an average of US $ 110 over the last three months. Oil subsidy for the year is about Rs 24,000 crore for FY12. This will rise on account of the higher

cost of oil being borne by the government. While there have been moves to link some prices of oil-products to the market, there would still tend to be an increase in subsidy on LPG, diesel, kerosene. The government has already enhanced its borrowing programme in H2 FY12 by Rs 52,000 crore, to bridge the fiscal gap.

Higher rates will come in the way of potential borrowers in the ECB market. Today given the interest rate differentials in domestic and global markets, there is an advantage in using the ECB route. With the depreciating rupee, this will make it less attractive. Further, those who have to service their loans will have to bear the higher cost of debt service. Usually exports get a boost in case the domestic currency depreciates because exports become cheaper in international markets. However, given sluggish global conditions, only some sectors would tend to gain where our competitiveness will increase such as textiles, leather goods, processed food products and gems and jewellery. In case, imported raw material is used in these industries they would be adversely affected. Therefore, exports may not be able to leverage fully. However, When a currency depreciates, the exporters rejoice because they get more of the local currency for every unit of foreign currency though the quantum of trade remains unchanged. But this time, many exporters were caught off guard. For one, there is little dollar supply in the market as most exporters seem to have covered themselves in the Rs 45-46 range. “Sudden changes in the position of the rupee do not really matter much. The depreciating rupee will be positive for the Indian IT sector who generate more than 80-90 per cent of their $70 billion revenue from the overseas markets and this kind of appreciation in foreign currency will enhance their actual realisation of revenue in dollar terms. Every one per cent change in rupee-dollar has a 40 basis points impact on the margins on the net profit numbers of IT services companies like TCS, Infosys, HCL to mention a few. However, IDBI Bank chairman R M Malla was of the viewed that “exporters gain only in the short term and after that overseas buyers seek price adjustment.” Individually, expatriates living outside India too gain by rupee depreciation. In fact, the expat Indians understand the currency movement lot better than the resident Indians.

Bearish sentiments took a strong grip on domestic equity markets which led to foreign investors selling their interests, again leading to increased demand for the dollar. The Indian rupee has lost 20 per cent in the past four months itself. Analysts expect pressure to continue on the rupee at least in the short term because of the country’s large current account deficit, which has tripled to $15 billion in the April-June quarter of current fiscal, when compared to the previous quarter. The difference between a country’s imports of goods, services and its exports is called current account deficit. For the whole of 2012-13, current account deficit is expected to be around $70 billion.

Topic: World wide Price rise

A sharp increase in food prices over the past couple of years, intensifying in early 2008, has raised serious concerns about food and nutrition for many poor people in developing countries. The key affected areas are Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Central America. There are also related concerns about inflation, and – in some countries – about civil unrest. The current situation is distinctive because it is not just a select few but nearly all major food and feed commodities that are seeing a 'concurrence of the hike in world prices'. Real prices are higher than they have been since the 1974 price spike. When adjusted for inflation and the recent decline of the dollar, the food-price increases are smaller but still dramatic, carrying serious consequences for thepurchasing power of the poor .

Dramatic increases in international agricultural commodity prices began in 2006 and peaked in July 2008. An equally remarkable and rapid decline of those prices then ensued, accompanied by extreme volatility in those prices. The trend in food prices lagged the rapid increases in other commodity prices, with rice among the most expensive at the peak and rising as much as crude oil. High commodity prices quickly raised farm gate prices in developed countries. In developing countries, poor market integration and border barriers may have limited pass-through of these prices to the farm gate, but there was more rapid food price and general inflation than occurred in many developed countries. Countries were impacted to differing extents, and food riots occurred in the most affected cases. In response to the crisis, countries from India and Egypt to Vietnam and Indonesia banned exports of rice, a staple for half the world. World food prices rose to a record in December on higher sugar, grain and oilseed costs, the United Nations said. An index of 55 food commodities tracked by the Food and Agriculture Organization gained for a sixth month to 214.7 points, above the previous all-time high of 213.5 in June 2008, the Rome-based UN agency said in a monthly report.

Moreover, debate persists on the exogenous mechanisms driving these changes, which are often interrelated (e.g., worldwide economic boom and then global recession, speculation in commodities). The goal will be to identify factors likely to drive commodity prices in the future and to provide some understanding of the dynamics and persistence of the observed global price changes. There is an emerging and reasonable consensus among experts and academics about the range of causes. However, debate is ongoing about the relative contribution of these causes. There is certainly no one, single cause; rather, many factors are interacting in different, locally specific ways.

Causes vary between different places and over time, as has happened in previous commodity booms. Some are cyclical, some are structural and some are unique The cost of food climbed 25 percent from a year earlier in December, based on the FAO figures. The agency's food-price indicator rose from 206 points in November. Record fuel prices, weather- related crop problems,

increasing demand from the growing Indian and Chinese middle classes, and the push to grow corn for ethanol fuel all contributed to the crisis that year. Global food production will have to rise 70 percent by 2050 as the world population expands to 9.1 billion people from about 6.8 billion people in 2010, the FAO has said.

Main factors responsible for the recent rises in food prices:–

- Weather disruptions, including serious droughts, have affected output in several key producing countries (Australia, Turkey, Ukraine and parts of North America) in the mid-2000s. This has led to two successive years of negative growth in world cereal production.
- Under-investment in rural infrastructure and agricultural innovation
- Increased demand due to use of food crops in biofuel production has resulted in reduced soybean and wheat cultivation.
- World production of cereals has slowed, causing a decline in stocks over the last decade. This has weakened the ability of the world food system to cope with shocks and created conditions in which short-term shocks cause large price increases (Wiggins, 2008).High cost of oil and energy is affecting transportation of agricultural inputs and outputs, mechanical cultivation, fertilisers and pesticides.
- Increasing and changing demand in China and India, due to economic growth, has led to increased consumer purchasing power and consequent shifts away from traditional staples and toward higher-value foods like meat and milk. However, some analysts believe that the effect of this on world prices has been exaggerated.
- Topsoil erosion: modern ploughing, overgrazing, fertiliser and pesticide use result in the steady depletion of worldwide topsoil. Water and winds carry away the soil, when it is not fixed by plant cover. An estimated 25 billion tons of topsoil are lost to erosion each year. The UN estimates that erosion has now seriously degraded about 40 per cent of the world's agricultural land.
- Increasing urbanisation often means that more people are becoming purchasers rather than producers of food.

Food in Figures

- 93,000,000 Acres of corn planted by US farmers last year, up 19 per cent on 2006.
- 76% Amount of US corn used for animal feed.
- 8kg Amount of grain it takes to produce 1kg of beef.

- 20% Portion of US corn used to produce five billion gallons of ethanol in 2006-07.
- 50kg Quantity of meat consumed annually by the average Chinese person, up from 20kg in 1985.
- 10% Anticipated share of biofuels used for transport in the EU by 2020.
- $500m The UN World Food Programme's shortfall this year, in attempting to feed 89 million needy people.
- 9.2bn The world's predicted population by 2050. It's 6.6bn now.
- 130% The rise in the cost of wheat in 12 months.
- 16 times The overall food consumption of the world's richest 20 per cent compared with that of the poorest 20 per cent.
- 58% Jump in the price of pork in China in the past year.
- $900 the cost of one tonne of Thai premier rice, up 30 per cent in a month.

It has been argued that by 2030 there will be 600 million more chronically under-nourished people in the world due to continued pressure on prices, in part due to the conversion of maize away from food uses to ethanol production. Demand for agricultural commodities – food, feed, and fuel – is likely to continue to escalate. Climate change and rising energy demand could re-accelerate food prices in the future. Ad-hoc market and trade policies such as export bans and import subsidies add further volatility in the international food market. Higher food prices can have radically different effects across countries and population groups.

A recent IFPRI report provides a conceptual framework for understanding these impacts, which powerfully highlights the complexity of cause and effect. Broadly speaking, at the country level, net food exporters will benefit from improved terms of trade, although the benefits may be offset in situations where exports are being banned to protect consumers. Net food-importing nations, however, will struggle to meet domestic food demand.

An FAO report published in June 2008 highlights twenty two developing countries that are especially vulnerable due to a combination of high levels of chronic hunger (more than 30 per cent under-nourishment), and high dependence on imports of petroleum products (100 per cent in most countries) and, in many cases, also of major grains (rice, wheat and maize) for domestic consumption. Food-price increases are having serious consequences for the purchasing power of the poor. Affected groups include the rural landless, pastoralists, small-scale farmers and the urban poor. Despite the various causes of food crises, the hardships that individuals and communities face have striking similarities across disparate groups and settings.

These include:

- Inability to afford food, and related lack of adequate caloric intake
- Distress sales of productive assets
- Migration of household members in search of work
- Reduced household spending on healthcare, education and other necessities.

The rise in global commodity prices is fueling inflation everywhere particularly in developing countries where food and energy forms a major percentage of the inflation basket. This has forced countries like India and China to accelerate interest rate hikes to cool down inflation. Rising Food Prices has caused distress in a number of places leading to food riots in Africa and have been said to be a leading cause of the revolutions in the Middle East. Oil Prices continues to increase unabated as dollar decreases with US Money Printing. Commodities are touching new all time peaks as rising global demand, finite resources, money printing by developed countries fuel price hikes. Silver has been increasing in a parabolic manner with other commodities too showing heart-stopping jumps in prices. The rise in global wheat, rice prices has been at a record as well. Almost all commodities have seen sharp prices increase.

Specific policies are needed to deal with the changing causes and consequences of high food prices, to help the most vulnerable people in the short term, while working to stabilise food prices by increasing agricultural production in the long term. A detailed set of policy prescriptions has been laid out in the Comprehensive Framework for Action (CFA), developed by the High Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis. The CFA highlights two major objectives – meeting immediate needs, and building longer-term resilience – with related outcomes and actions.

The problem of rising prices is one of the most important problems that India is facing now. Over the past several years rising prices have become a chronic malady in India’s national life. They have given rise to widespread distress,especially among people who are already living at the subsistence level and also among those in the fixed income group, viz., wage earners and the salaried classes. Because of persistent increases in the prices of the necessaries of life, the number of people living below the poverty line has been steadily increasing. The unprecedented rise in prices of almost all the important necesscities of life has posed a serious problem before us. Millions of people find it hard to earn one square meal a day, because prices of food grains, edible oils, sugar other food articles have been raising very rapidly. This has caused great unrest among common people. The annual average of whole sale prices index always owes an increasing trend. This alarming rate of increase in prices has thrown the countries economic out of gear and made common man’s life miserable millions in India to-day sleep without food at

night. All their day's work does not even promise them sufficient to eat and drink. Everybody is complaining of increasing prices day by day. Prices have become double in the last few years and there are many things which are now beyond the reach of common people. This phenomenal increase in prices is not the result of any simple factor. There are several factors which are responsible for it. Apart from industrialists, manufacturers and middle men, our government is also at fault. It is increasing taxes.

Price rise does occur in the process of economic development. But in India the rise of price has been much higher than what it should have been. It broadly means holding the inventories and selling it at higher price. It creates artificial scarcity in the economy inspite of increase in production and results in price rise. The rapid growth of population means more mouths to feed, more demand of clothing and basic necessities as compared to supply of goods and services which result in price rise. It means printing more currency notes and coins. In India deficit financing is done mainly to meet the budgetary deficit. It results in more supply of money in the economy but when increase in supply of money corresponds with less increase in the supply of goods and services (National output) there is rise in price of goods and services. Money supply includes currency notes and coins, demands and time deposits. Increase in money supply shows that people in an economy are ready to spend more money for buying goods and services.

The economists are of opinion that growing economy of the country has given rise to the rising prices. Such economy causes inflation. In inflation purchasing power runs ahead of purchasable goods. In other words, in a growing country, the supply of money increase at once but the supply of goods takes time to increase. Again the population has increased. This has further increased inflation. Because of growing population the current corruption is increasing. The factors which contribute to price rise can be broadly classified as external and internal. In the context of the situation as it has developed in India, we have heard it repeatedly many times that the rise in prices witnessed in the country is in part due to the impact of global inflation. Obviously, we can not do much about global inflation and the impact it has on the price situation in India. But we can certainly apply our minds to identifying and controlling or at least mitigating the rigours of the internal factors which may be aggravating the situation. The symptoms of the disease are clear enough. But before we start thinking of the remedies, we need to form a clear idea of its internal causes also. According to economists, the main culprit in this context is inflation. In layman's language, it describes a situation in which too much money is chasing too few goods. We are repeatedly told that money supply in the country has been increasing. This means that the amount of money circulating in the market has been going up. Naturally enough if it exceeds the value of goods available in the market, the prices are bound to go up.

Rising prices encourage hoarding, profiteering, black –marketing and corruption. They discourage export. They cause devaluation of currency. Lastly, they seriously disrupt equitable distribution of wealth. The government's recent decision to opening up retail sector to big multinational corporation going to create more problem because, these forces take full control of the market and whenever they want to make manipulate the market. On the other hand, it badly affect the govts. performance and public anger. The Present Prime Minister and Finance Minister, without making a second thought try to open up all sectors even the retail sector which will badly affect the retail traders as well as the consumers. On the farmer's & direct consumers point of view, the govt. is doing nothing on this issue, just making a temporary noises, with no action. At the late hours, the govt. need to look into all aspects in its policies to address the pressing farmers issue, otherwise the present problem of price rise and farmers suicide going to increase many fold. It is an early wake up call.

India is a developing economy. Rise in prices is inevitable in a developing economy. The programmes of economic development generate larger employment and income. These increase the demand for consumer goods and services. There has been a sharp increase in prices of essential commodities in the past few years. This has been really a matter of great concern. Inflation is a rise in prices and wages caused by an increase in the money supply and demand for goods, and resulting in a fall in the value of money. Limited inflation contributes to economic growth. But for some time now, the level of inflation has gone far beyond acceptable limits. This has caused harassment to the common man. The standard of living of the common people is closely linked to the nation's economic situation. Black-marketing and scarcity of essential commodities are both causes and effects of rising prices. Corrupt traders try to earn money by indulging in these practices. Corruption, in all its forms, fuels price rise.

The alarming rise of population is another factor for the rise in prices. India is the second most populated country in the world with a population of more than one billion. In spite of the considerable developments in all sectors since Independence, conditions of scarcity still prevail due to overpopulation. The majority of the people of India belong to the poorer sections. The Government should take measures to tackle the menace of price rise at the earliest. The consumers should be guided about their rights and privileges. They should be made aware of the corrupt practices. The public distribution system should be strengthened. Corrupt officials should be brought to books. Effective steps should be taken to increase production in all sectors. To reduce the demand and pressure on our limited resources, the rise in population should be checked.

Rise in prices gives rise to economic disparities. It widens the gap between the rich and the poor. Due to soaring prices, even food is getting beyond the reach of the poor. A democracy cannot

flourish or function in such a condition. However some steps taken by the central government has given some relief to the common people. Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is one of them. There is a testintony to the fact how rise in prices leave a great impact an the common man's mind. In 1990s, the sudden and steep increase in the price of onions brought about the downfall of one State Government. A similar rise in the price of sugar brought down another.

Continuous price-hike may lead to anarchy - a complete failure of all government and official systems. Rising prices spare neither the rich nor the poor. Rising prices have given rise to widespread distress among the fixed income groups, viz., wage earners and the salaried classes. The Central and State Governments often blame each other for the rise in prices.

The drop in agriculture production during the last couple of years has resulted in the shortage and availability of food items, which hit the economically weaker sections of the society the most. Food prices are cyclical in nature. A sharp increase in food prices during the year 2009-10 period has been a cause of concern. A significant part of this inflation is due to supply-side bottlenecks in some of the essential commodities, precipitated by the delayed monsoon and drought conditions in some part of the country. India cannot be immune to global price situations especially when a significant proportion of the country's requirement of oil is met through imports.

For food prices to stabilise or to be brought down, agriculture production would have to be given top priority. Incentives for the farmer, subsidies for fertiliser and seeds (it may be reviewed on year to year, crop to crop basis) and remunerative rates for farm produce may help to increase the yield. Availability of easy loans to help mechanise the farming may also help to increase food production. The middleman, who makes hay, while the farmer suffers, may either be removed or his role minimised. Prices of food items multiply many a time, when they leave the field and reach the common consumer through the street hawkers. Severe action against hoarders, who pile stocks, while the common man suffers must also be taken. Forward trading in food items must be banned. If these steps are taken sincerely by the Central and State Governments, the common man may be spared the pangs of rising prices.

The problem is very dangerous. It needs measures – short and long term, to be adopted. These measures include as appeal mixed up with threat to the sellers, raids on go downs and other hoards of grain, the seizing of black, the cut of Rs 400 crores in central expenditure, the increase in bank rates to 5 %, the opining of fair price shops, the rationing of provisions, the imports of food-grains from some foreign counties, the curbing of unproductive expenditure by the Government, the readjustment in the scale of pay and the emphasis on small plants. The short term measure will help the government to hold the price-line.

The long term measures will help the government to withdraw the huge amount of money pumped into circulation during the last year. To sum up, some of internal causes which precipitate price increases are excess money supply, faulty planning, unrealistic import and export policies, imbalance in production, rapacity among traders and excessive increase in population. Given the necessary will and determination, none of these presents an insuperable problem.

The causes of increase in money supply are well known, viz., large scale deficit financing over the years, increase in bank-credit, the cost of food procurement and subside etc. Surely India does not lack talent which can find the answers of these problems.

Experience tells us the only impulse to which a majority of the business people in India respond is fear. Appeals to their patriotic instincts fall on deaf ears because they seem to have no such instinct. The only way in which they can be made to behave is strict enforcement of the laws on the statuebook to keep the prices of essential commodities under check and harsh measures against hoarding and profiteering.

They may not be able to understand the language of reason but they will certainly appreciate determined action. Simultaneously, steps will have to be taken to increase production, particularly of such items of mass consumption as may be in short supply. Another step that is urgently called for in this context is the streamlining and strengthening of the public distribution system. Last but not least, it has to be remembered that all these measures can be successful only to the extent we can control population growth so that it is not allowed to make nonsense of all planning. Given the necessary will and determination and with the active co-operation of people at large, the problem of rising prices can certainly be solved.

Therefore, The govt. should try to crate such a mechanism at the earliest to liberate the farmers from the clutches of middleman. The existing commodity exchange only benefits these traders and not the farmers which need to be noted. There is no proper check in FCI and other godowns to prevent black marketing. By stocking through these godowns, the manipulators creating artificial price rise and then it encouraged black marketing. The high inflation can be fully controlled if the govt. and the concerned authorities make proper check on the market and raid various godowns across the country.

Topic: Panchayati Raj in India

Panchayati Raj was a pious dream of our great leader Mahatma Gandhi who wanted to strengthen the democracy at the grassroots level by this system. The need Panchayati Raj was stressed by Pandit Nehru, and it was repeatedly and forcefully advocated by Late Shri Jai Prakash Narayan. But, unfortunately, for various reasons, not much headway could be made for

the realization of this ideal. Ever since Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi came to the helm of affairs in the country he repeatedly stressed the importance of Panchayati Raj. He formed his views on the subject by under-taking whirlwind tours of rural India to familiarize himself with the realities of rural life, by holding frequent workshops of District magistrates all over the country, and thus assessing their views and understanding their difficulties. In our country, senventy percent of the population is in rural areas. As such, amidst widespread diversity and various problems, the main attention of our country is to focus on rural planning development. Thus it has become important to implement Panchayati Raj with full vigour and dedication to prepare ourselves to face the challenges of the 21st century. Our country is spread in a vast area and it is not easy to solve the various problems being encountered by rural people. This gives rise to the need of participation by rural folks on priority basis. For this reason, Gandhiji wanted to keep the base of the ladder of growth in the rural areas and make it reach the centre through gradual process of development. So he proclaimed that India must follow the system of self-government functioning through Panchayats.

Gandhi's slogan of "Gram Swaraj" was most remarkable and accepted by all Indians. Everybody realized that all problems whether administrative, social, political or economical can be solved by our own participation through panchayat Raj. As a first step in direction of Panchayat Raj, composite basic development was entrusted to the rural bodies by introduction of Community Development Programmes. This step gave rise to a network of panchayats spread almost all over the country. However, it could not help its evolution because of its functioning on the directions from the top. Then in 1956, an official committee was set up by the government of India to examine the problems related to implementation of Panchayati Raj. This committee was headed by Shri Balwant Raj Mehta who recommended in its report the introduction of three-tier system for self-government at the grassroots levels. It also recommended transfer of more responsibility and power to these bodies. Hence, the recommendation of the Mehta Committee led to inauguration of the Panchayati Raj at Nagaur in Rajasthan on October 2, 1959. This was a great tribute on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Panchayats have been amongst the oldest political institutions of India. But in the form in which it is constituted and made to work, is a modern innovation. After independence, Panchayati Raj was strengthened by the Central and State Governments. In 1952, the Community Development Programmes (CDP) were initiated. The National Extension Service (NES) followed it. In 1957 a committee was set-up to study the working of CDP and NES. The committee, under the chairmanship of Balwant Rai Mehta, recommended a three-tier system of rural local government namely Village Panchayat at village level, Panchayat Samiti at block level and Zila Parishad at

the district level. All the State Governments except Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland passed the Panchayati Raj Legislation.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated independent India's Panchayati Raj on October 2, 1959 at Nagaur, Rajasthan. Regarding Panchayati Raj, article 40 of the Indian Constitution reads, "The state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endows them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government." Panchayati Raj is generally a three-tier structure of local self-government at village, block and district levels.

A Panchayat consists of five or more public representatives. Members of the Panchayat are called the "Pa chats". They are elected by the Gram Sabha by secret ballot in all States except Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. In these States the mode of election is by show of hands. For the purpose of election. the entire Gram Sabha area is divided into territorial wards. Each ward elects one Panch. But there are exceptions to this system in the States of Assam. Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Punjab. In Bihar, the Panchayat consists of nine members including the president. Out of nine members, four are directly elected and the other four are nominated by its president. The presiding officer of the Panchayat is known by a variety of names. He is called `President' `Sarpanch', 'Pradhan', 'Mukhiya', 'Adhyaksh', etc. The made of president's election is also not same in every State. In same States he is elected by Panchas and in same by Grant Sabha. The president can be removed from his office. There is a provision in all States legislation about his removal. It is usually done by a majority of two-third votes of members of the Panchayat.

The tenures of the Panchayat in various states varies from three to five years. This council of five representatives is fully responsible far the administration and development of a village. Panchayati Raj is a complete process of governance and it refers to a system organically linking people from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha. The functions of a Panchayat are usually classified into two categories obligatory and discretionary. Obligatory functions include-construction and maintenance of public wells, public streets, sanitation, development of agriculture, cottage industry, registration of birth, death and marriage, collection of land revenues, etc. The discretionary functions generally include planting and nursing of trees on the roadside, construction and maintenance of dharamshalas, sarais and resthouses, looking after public health and safety, reclaiming unhealthy localities, etc. To perform these functions, the Panchayat has been given certain sources of revenue. It is empowered to impose same compulsory taxes like-tax an buildings, trade, private toilets, vehicles and animals, etc. In addition, the Panchayat can also levy some other taxes with the approval of Zila Parishad.

Panchayati Raj is an integral pact of our democracy. In West Bengal the Left Front government took initiative in 1978 to give a new life to its Panchayats an the lines of the Osaka Mehta Committee recommendations. But there are same ailments the Panchayats have been suffering from. Lack of adequate" finance comes in the way of effective functioning. In the absence of trained and full-time secretaries, the Panchayats do not function properly. The Sarpanch as a member of the Panchayat Samiti has assumed° overriding importance and over-shadowed the Panchayat.

In many places Panchayats themselves are working as oppressive instruments. Absence of land reforms, law levels of literacy, especially among women, patriarchal system, etc. work against weaker sections in the village. It also seriously affects women's position. The Osaka Mehta committee also concluded that Panchayati Raj institutions had little resources and the State was not paying attention to them. The attitude of bureaucrats, red-tapism and corruption in the system stand an the way of effective functioning of Panchayats.

The State Government has the power to delimit and alter its jurisdiction. It may suspend a resolution of the Panchayat if it considers it a danger to public life. It may suspend or remove a Panch or a Sarpanch under certain conditions. The reservation of seats for women, Schedule Castes and Tribes is a welcome step. The cabinet approved a proposal for a Constitutional Amendment Bill for enhancing reservation far women in Panchayats at all tiers from one-third to at least 50 percent. The proposal aims to amend Article 243 D of the Constitution that currently provides for 33 percent reservation for women in Panchayats. Bihar, Uttarakhand. Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh already have 50 per cent reservation far women at the local level. The Panchayat elections are conducted and supervised by the Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections. All these measures ensure a bright future of Panchayati Raj in India. Stranger and abler governance at the grassroots will make for a stranger state, and a mare powerful nation.

Constitutional Provisions and Major Landmarks in the Development of Panchayati Raj Institutions

1. Article 40 provides that "The state shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and to endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.
2. In 1952 Community Development Programmes were started (first in Rajasthan) to bring people within the ambit of planning.
3. In 1957 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was appointed to review the working of Community Development Programme. Its recommendations had far reaching consequences for the

Panchayati Raj institution.
i. Democratic decentralization
ii. democratically elected bodies at three levels (village, block and district)
iii. planning and development tasks to be assigned to local bodies.

4. In 1977 Ashoka Mehta Committee was constituted with members belonging to different political parties. It was first ever committee exclusively for PR bodies.
i. preferred two tier systems: Zila Parishad and Mandal Panchayat.
ii. Participation of political parties in the elections.
iii. While Zila Parishad would be policy making, Mandal Panchayat would be implementing agency.
iv. Entrusted compulsory power of taxation.

- 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill (1989) introduced by Rajiv Gandhi Government
- 74th Constitutional Amendment Bill (1990) introduced by V.P. Singh Government
- 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992)

The 73rd Amendment Act passed in 1992 and implemented in 1993 marked a new era in the history of PR institutions. It added a new Part IX consisting of 16 Articles and Eleventh schedule to the Indian Constitution. By this amendment, Constitutional status has been conferred on PR bodies.

The 73rd Amendment Act (1992) marked a thumping point in the history of PR bodies. It showed that nation as whole, favoured the mechanism of democratic decentralization. However, very soon some of the dormant issues came to the forefront and continued to hamper its functioning. Moreover certain ambiguities in the act also became clear. Chief Features The key features of this Act are as follows:

1. Uniform three tier Panchayti Raj system at the village, intermediate and district levels. However, States with a population of less than 20 lakhs are given the option to avoid intermediate level Panchayat.
2. Gram Sabha has been hailed as foundation stone of the Panchayat System.
3. State legislatures by law may make provisions for the composition of the Panchayats.
4. Elections to all the three tiers and to the Chairperson of village Panchayat shall be direct.
5. The Chairperson of a Panchayat and other members of Panchayat shall have the right to vote in the meetings of Panchayat.

6. The Chairperson of Panchayat at the village level shall be elected in such a manner as the legislature of a state may be law, provide. The Chairperson of a Panchayat at the intermediate level or district level shall be elected by and amongst, the elected members thereof.
7. Reservation of seats for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their population. Out of the total seats reserved for the SCs and STs Not less than one-third seats to be reserved for Women belonging to SCs and STs.
8. One-third of seats at all the three levels and also the Chairperson elected to three levels, to be reserved for women. It includes the number of seats reserved for SC and ST women.
9. The State Legislature may by law make provision for reservation of seats for backward classes.
10. State Legislatures may, by law, make provisions which enable the Panchayats to function as an institution of self government. It includes power of taxation.
11. There is a provision of a Finance Commission for reviewing financial position of the Panchayats. It has to be constituted every fifth year. The details are to be determined by State Legislature.
12. There is a provision of State Election Commission constituted by Governor. Subject to the provisions of any law made by the State Legislature, the conditions of service and tenure of office of the State Election Commissioner shall be such as the Governor may by rule determine. State Election Commissioner can be removed only in a like manner and on like ground as a Judge of a High Court.
13. The Governor can supersede the Panchayats by dissolving them. But, the election must be held within six months of dissolution. The Panchayats so elected shall remain in operation only for the remaining period of tenure.
14. The courts cannot interfere in the electoral matter of Panchayats. The validity of an election can be challenged only through an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as provided by any law made by the legislature of a state.
15. Following areas are provided immunity from Part IX

(a) Scheduled areas and Tribal areas
(b) States of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram
(c) Hill areas in State of Manipur for which District Councils exist
(d) Darjeeling district of West Bengal Contribution of Panchayati Raj in Rural Development

Despite weaknesses and failure PR bodies had given following contribution in rural development:

1. Aroused public awareness in the area of governance.

2. Influenced participation of people in administrative tasks.
3. Prepared ground for emergence of a new leadership.
4. Made the exercise of planning more effective Panchayats after 73rd Amendment Act (1992)

Conclusion

To sum, the history of Panchayats have witnessed many ups and downs. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment changed its course by assigning a constitutional status. A wide range of powers have been entrusted to Panchayat to fulfill the objective of democratic decentralization. It has much success to its credits. The Panchayats are no longer upper class, rich male's destinations.

They are neither an instrument of maintaining status quo. They have drawn millions of females and weaker sections of the society into political arena. They have aroused a feeling of common destiny. People have realized that Panchayats remain the basic tool to address their ill plight and translate their dream into reality.

Nevertheless, the vested interests are not ready to adjust to changes. Most often, Panchayats become a venue for drama. Ruthless violence during elections has feared the general people to an extent that they seldom participate in elections. Compulsory education in the spirit of constitution and effective socialization through media, civil society groups and intellectuals will have to play major role in this direction.

Yet, there can be no denying the fact that in most parts of the country, elections to the Panchayats have been irregular. The Bill seeks to put an end to such delays and difficulties. The essence of democracy is elections. But elections to Panchayati Raj institutions have been most irregular and uncertain. A mandatory provision in the constitution is therefore necessary. A statutory provision in the state law does not quite have the same sanctity. The Bill provides for regular periodic elections of Panchayati Raj institutions. In the absence of any compelling provision to reconstitute Panchayats within a reasonable period of time, by democratic elections, suspended Panchayats have remained suspended for years and dissolved Panchayats have remained dissolved for up to a decade or even more. Their existence has depended less on the mandate of the people then on the whim of state Governments.

The bill leaves it to the state to determine the grounds and conditions on which Panchayats may be suspended or dissolved. The state Legislatures are to specify the grounds on which the Governor may suspend or dissolve a Panchayat. That is a matter for the Governor, acting in accordance with the constitution on the advice of the state Government. But dissolved Panchayats must be reconstituted within a reasonable period of time. It is the people who will determine, within a matter of months, the shape of the reconstituted Panchayat. The Bill will ensure that Panchayati Raj has a democratic character similar to the Lok Sabha and the state

Assemblies and Constitutional protection for their functioning as representative institutions of the people.

“The single greatest event in the evolution of democracy in India was the enactment of the Constitution which established democracy in Parliament and in the state Legislature. The historic, revolutionary Panchayati Raj Bill takes the place alongside that great event as the enshrinement in the constitution of democracy at the grassroots”. Once democracy is accorded to the Panchayats the same sanctity as is enjoyed by parliament and the state Legislature, the doors will be opened for the participation in democratic institution to about seven lakh elected representatives.

In this way the power-broker, the middlemen, the vested interests will be eliminated. For the minutest municipal function the people have to run around finding persons with the right connections who would intercede for them with the distant source of power. The system has been captured by the power-brokers who have established their vice-like grip on it, only because democracy has not functioned at the grass-roots. Once the people have their own elected representatives from electorates as small as a hundred persons, the source of power will lie only as far away as the Panchayat Ghar, not in some distant state capital or even the more distant capital of the country. There will be direct elections to Panchayats at all levels. Every voter will have his own representative in the Gram Panchayat, the mid-level Panchayat. The representative will be responsible to small and recognized electorate. It they fulfill the mandate of the people the re-elected; otherwise the people will throw them out of office, power of the vote.

In establishing the institutions of democracy in Parliament and in the state Legislature, our founding fathers gave particular recognition to the disabilities suffered by the Scheduled Castes and tribes. Provision was made for the reservation of seats for the total electorate. This is a principle which has not been incorporated in most of the Panchayati Raj legislations enacted by the state Legislatures. The democratic rights of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes cannot be secured by good intentions alone. It has to be secured in the first instance, by reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions on the same basis as reservations are given in the Lok Sabha and the state Assemblies. The Bill makes it mandatory for the state legislatures to ensure reservation for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population in the relevant Panchayat area. Also, there will be reservations in Panchayats at all levels of 30% of the seats for women. The presence of women in large numbers in the Panchayats will not only make the Panchayats more representative but will also make them more efficient, honest, disciplined and responsible. It is the strength of moral character which women will bring to the Panchayats.

The Panchayats will have the power and authority to draw of plans within the framework of guidelines and conditions to be laid draw by the state Government. These plans will constitute the basic inputs for the planning process of higher levels. This will ensure that the voice of the people, their needs, their aspirations, their priorities become the building blocks of the edifice of planning. The second major responsibility of the Panchayats will be the implementation of development schemes assigned to them by the state Governments. These schemes should cover the major economic concerns of rural India, commencing with agriculture and land improvement and going on to irrigation. They must comprise the diversification of the rural economy into animal husbandry, dairying, poultry and fisheries. They must incorporate industrial activity in rural India. They must look to the day-to-day concerns of rural India, housing, drinking water, fuel and fodder.

The panchayats will also have the major responsibility for the administration of poverty-alleviation programmes. They would have to look to the education and culture, to health and family welfare, and to women and child development. Social welfare programmes for the weaker and handicapped sections would be the responsibility of the Panchayats. It is also proposed to give to the Panchayats the responsibility for the public distribution system which is so crucial to the survival of the weakest and the poorest, as also to the general health of the rural economy.

In this way development will be taken to the grassroots in rural India. The same concern must be extended to the growing urban and semi-urban population of the country. To this end, a new chapter has been added to the constitution. Urban Municipalities and corporations have been brought within the two major questions have been raised repeatedly.

Most reservations become a parliament feature of the Indian economic, educational and political scene? Must social disability, with the attached stigma of being a Harijan and hence being disallowed to enter the places of worship etc. continue for all times, privileges as their counterpart in the rural areas? Efforts have also been made to recast revamp and rejuvenate the cooperative movement, which Pundit Nehru always regarded as the essential compliment to Panchayati Raj.

Our democracy has reached the stage where the full participation of the people brooks no further delay. Those who decry Panchayati Raj as an election stunt are only those whose feudal interest will be overthrown by the power reaching the people. The late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi said, “We trust the people. We have faith in the people. It is the people who must determine their own destinies and the destiny of the nation. To the people of India let us ensure maximum democracy and maximum devolution of power. Let there be an end to the power-brokers. Let us give power to the people.

Contribution of Panchayati Raj Institutions to Rural Development

Of all the institutions of the modern and independent India, Panchayati Raj institutions are oldest and original institution. They remained an integral part of self sufficient village administration in ancient India. The British found it convenient for their objective even in its dismal days. They used it to collect revenue and consolidate their authority.

After independence, inspired by Gandhi's vision of "Ram Rajya" and realizing the practical significance of Panchayats, the leadership tried to revive the institution. They regarded it as the self-governing institution at the local level to ensure the effective participation of people in the process of growth and development. However, the history of Panchayati Raj system has not been uniform. It has witnessed many twist and turns, ups and downs.

The 64th Constitution Amendment Bill of May 15, 1989 has been a landmark in this context. It gave a new lease of life to Panchayati Raj as a truly representative system in our country. During the debate on the subject, the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi told the Lok Sabha that "Too often in the past Panchayati Raj has had functions without finances, responsibilities without authority, duties without the means for carrying them out. The Bill seeks to remove these disparities and bottlenecks and to make these rural legislatures or councils a fit and effective instrument of self-government." The Bill also made it obligatory that elections be held regularly every five years, but various states have failed to fulfill this obligation and the Centre has had to intervene. Thus, the Bill has proved a milestone in revitalizing an ancient and time-tested democratic institution. The Panchayati Raj system is best suited for developmental and administrative requirements of rural population and society because of wide variation in the nature of local problems. It is an inexpensive form of local self-government, which can suitably identify the local problems and issues, particularly of the poor and weaker sections of society, like scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, small, marginal and landless farmers, women and backward classes. It also ensures quick and equitable measures to solve the problems. It provides a proper forum, where local people can meet, discuss and chalk out programmes, policies and their speedy implementation. It also ensures decentralisation of power, and effective developmental activities, in which active participation of the rural masses can be envisaged.

The main objective of the system is to develop a method of decentralisation and devaluation of powers, functions and authority to the rural folk with a view to ensure rapid socio economic progress and speedier and inexpensive justice. This is to be achieved through increasing agricultural production, development of cottage and rural industries, fuller and proper utilization of available local, natural and human resources with the active participation of the people. Besides progressive decentralisation of powers and authority, it aims at improving the living standard of the rural people in general and the weaker sections in particular.

Thus, the panchayat system in India assumes a very significant role because nearly 80% of its population lives in villages, spread over about 95% of its geographical area. This system is quite rational, practicable and in perfect harmony with the spirit of democracy and should be further strengthened and encouraged. It should be made economically viable and self-sufficient by providing adequate resources, funds and generous grants. The reservation of seats for women, scheduled castes and tribes in panchayats is a welcome step, for it would make the institution of panchayat more democratic, representative and balanced. The panchayat elections are conducted and supervised by the Election Commission to ensure free and fair elections. All these measures ensure a bright and long lasting future of panchayat system in India.

Topic: Freedom of Speech

The constitution of India grants six types of Fundamental Rights to Indian citizens. These are defined as basic human freedoms which every Indian citizen has the right to enjoy for the proper development of his personality. The Right to Freedom of Speech is recognised as a Right to Freedom under Article 19-22 of our Constitution. Freedom of speech is freedom to speak without censorship or limitation. But in practice the right to freedom of speech is not absolute, it has some limitations also. It is recognised as a Human Right under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Actually the right to freedom of expression is synonymous with the Right to Freedom of Speech. Freedom of expression is sometimes used to indicate not only freedom of verbal speech, but any act of seeking, receiving and imparting information relating to ideas, regardless of the medium used.

THE first cry of a new-born infant is an expression of its response to the outside world. The desire to express one is a corollary to the human capacity for feeling, imagination and thought. The need to give vent to our ideas and feelings is at times so great that we have no hesitation in talking to ourselves, when alone. The consideration of the rights and wrongs of free expression, however, arise only when such expression takes the form of communication-between individuals or among groups. Communication of ideas has been basic to the very development of society and civilization. Exchange of thoughts contributes to the growth of an individual’s personality even as it helps him or her to understand the world around and the society of which he or she is a part, and, perhaps, contribute a little to that society. However, complete freedom of expression has never been entertained in any society; indeed, it is doubtful if it could ever be countenanced given the imperfect nature of human beings.

After India got independence, the fundamental rights were included in the Constitution by the Drafting Committee. The writers of the Constitution regarded democracy of no avail if civil liberties, like freedom of speech and religion were not recognised and protected by the State.

According to them, democracy is, in essence, a government by opinion and therefore, the means of formulating public opinion should be secured to the people of a democratic nation. For this purpose, our Constitution guaranteed to all citizens of India the freedom of speech and expression in the form of the Fundamental Rights.

Freedom of Speech is the most precious gift of democracy. This concept had emerged gradually during the European Enlightenment. England's Bill of Right (1689) granted 'Freedom of Speech in Parliament'. This concept is also inspired by the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted during the French Revolution in 1789. In India, the Rowlatt Act in 1919 gave extensive powers to the British government and the police. They were allowed to control individual rights and freedoms like restrictions on public gatherings, censorship of media and publications, etc. The public opposition to this act eventually led to non-violent Civil Disobedience movement throughout the country under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The main demands of this movement were guaranteed civil freedoms and limitations on British government powers.

Freedom of expression relates to two forms of communication: purveying of information which is a major function of the media, and the creative aspect which involves the expression of an individual's imagination or ideas. There is no doubt that free flow of information helps entire nations to progress, and this relates specially to scientific and economic matters. In a democracy, a vigilant press is considered to be an effective watchdog of political behaviour: it plays an important role in both building up and disseminating public opinion. And if a government has national and social interest at all, it wit: be glad to get a true feedback on its policies and their implementation.

Freedom of Speech is a powerful instrument for all civilised and democratic nations of the world. In democracy, freedom of speech mainly means freedom of the press. The phrase 'freedom of the press' has not been used in Article 19 of our Constitution but freedom of expression includes freedom of the press. By the press we mean all the media of mass communication. Free press generally means the right to publish, the right to confidentiality of sources, and the right to access. Not only is the press an integral part of the freedom of speech, but it is a part of a system of social control whereby relationships between individuals and institutions are adjusted. The press has the power to monitor all the important social institutions of society like family, religion, polity, law, etc.

Nowadays we are living in a world dominated-by the mass media. It is increasingly occupying the central stage in our lives. It acts as an effective catalyst of the changes in our society. The

newspaper is a mirror of the times and has become an integral part of our life. The press in India has a very high tradition. Many newspapers like Balgangadhar Tilak's Kesari and Maratha, Gandhiji's Harijan, etc. roused the wave of nationalism in our country. The Indian press played a very crucial role during the freedom struggle. Today also press plays a very important role in our society. It serves the society by highlighting the crimes, nepotism and corruption in our country. It acts like a link between the people and the Government. It is the duty of the press to convey the grievances of the people. It is often seen that sometimes people do complain that the press is partial and not patriotic. The editorials of the newspapers, news coverages on the Television channels are often not objective and impartial, but coloured and motivated. Actually the media is controlled and owned by media barons, corporate giants, industrial houses, etc. Often the media lords use the power of the media to promote their own interest. The media men try to please their patrons and thus their coverages become biased and motivated. Common people think that their grievances and interests are ignored. The electronic media, like the Television and the Radio also plays an important role. Sometimes ago the radio lost its popularity, but now it has regained it. The power of the visual media, i.e., the Television is immense. The Television coverage of an incident can instantly mould public opinion. It can reach every nook and cranny of the globe to cover the extraordinary events like scenes of war, terrorist attacks, violence, natural calamities, sports events, etc. To cover all these, the journalists and the photographers sometimes put their lives at stake. A free press can help to remove the evils of the society, like poverty, social inequality, child marriage, child labour, dowry, insecurity of women, criminalization of politics, etc. A free press can help the society by criticising the corrupt politicians and government officials. Thus press can play the role of a watchdog of our society. Often media does much harm to international relations due to its biased coverage.

The free press has played a very significant role in our democracy. Several newspapers came up with blank editorial pages at the time of emergency declared by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. It was an unfortunate time, when the fundamental freedom of the press was curtailed. All the political activities of non-Congress political parties were banned and no newspaper was allowed to report the factual position. Organisations for protection of human rights have been set up in many countries. In India, many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are engaged in spreading awareness of civil liberties and empowerment of women and other weaker sections of the society.

Freedom of Speech is essential for our society. Without it, our literature, science, art, and music cannot flourish. If there is no Freedom of Speech, how can an epic be written or an invention be recognised ? Freedom of Speech is necessary for the development of our civilization. It has great value for both the individual and society. Here arises the question of social responsibility. The

individual should realise that he cannot publish anything that he desires. The Right to Freedom of Speech is not absolute. It is bounded by our social duty and moral obligation.

In the presentation of information, however, bias can enter-political, racial or social. The opinion of the controlling authority, be it the government or a private party, often colours even what goes by the name of 'news'. The question of media censorship of material which criticises the controlling authority or that which does not agree with the declared 'editorial policy' is part of the complex issue of media autonomy and editorial prerogative. But broadly speaking the freedom of expression is not an absolute freedom anywhere in the world. Our own Constitution puts "reasonable restrictions" on it in the interests of "the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state. friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence". A pretty long list of restrictions, one would say, and yet it has not been able to quite define the boundaries; the controversy over free expression rages as furiously as ever.

No sane person would disagree if one requires freedom of expression to stop short of abusing or maligning any person or community. However, it is not quite so easy to set limits on freedom of expression in so far as it conveys subjective ideas, thoughts and views. One's thoughts are free-at least one hopes so-but can all one's thoughts be expressed freely? If one has ideas greatly in variance with what society believes in and cherishes, there is bound to be a conflict between the individual and society. Most people like a smooth routine and cling to old beliefs: it gives them a sense of security; they look with suspicion on anything that might cause a change. And yet change is essential for a society to be dynamic, if it is not to stagnate and be fossilised. It takes a brave individual to speak outpour fresh ideas and views uncaring of consequences on a personal level. Ironically enough, religion which today is made an excuse to curb free speech has progressed mainly because individuals have, from time to time, questioned existing norms and tenets. The Buddha, Mahavira, Christ, Prophet Mohammad, Martin Luther, Sankara, Ramanuja, Nanak-all dared to express ideas which were at variance with the then widely prevalent beliefs, and either reformed religion or set up new sects. But their distinguishing trait was that they had something positive to offer, and did not merely indulge in destructive criticism of existent beliefs.

Generally, liberal and progressive opinion all over the world is against attacks on freedom of expression, especially artistic expression. It is averred that a prudish establishment can hardly be expected to be an arbitrator on art and obscenity. Very few people quarrel with the idea that crude vulgarity and unwonted or pointless violence should not find a place in creative work. However, when artistic expression appears to conflict with conventional morality, liberal thinkers would want informed critical opinion from respected persons in the arts to guide the

restrictions or any censorship. On the whole, people should be free to see a film or read a book and arrive at their own opinion. By the same yardstick, an artist has a right to express his or her viewpoint which has its own validity.

If authorities bowed to the wishes of each and every group to ban this or that work because it hurt some susceptibility or other, there would come a time when little artistic work would be produced, and that little would be insipid and not worth reading or viewing. Of course, every individual or group has a right to protest if it feels injured, and it would be within its rights to insist that its views too be aired in a suitable media. But it is wrong to insist that its views alone should be given importance and anything opposing it should not be expressed.

In the debate over free expression and restrictions over it, the champions of freedom tend to be seen as ‘broadminded’; the other side is supposed to be full for prudes and bigots. However, let us not forget that a bigot is anyone who clings to the idea that his or her group alone can be the arbiter of taste or decide what is right and what is wrong. Today, we have bigots on both sides-those who champion the cause of absolute free expression under any and every circumstance irrespective of the audience or its likely impact and those who are equally rigid in the view that nobody has a right to question what is held sacred by the ‘believers’. Both sides seem to think that they alone know the answers, and that these are valid for everyone, everywhere and for all times. What we see today is a sharp polarisation of attitudes on any issue, each side fiercely attacking the other as wholly wrong and showing supreme intolerance for any view but its own. There is no place for a viewpoint that is neither uncompromisingly for nor uncompromisingly against an issue. Things are viewed as pure black or pure white, and no place is left for grey where even if opposing views do not exactly meet, they could at least talk to each other.

A call for a liberal outlook is not to be confused with licence to legitimise any and every point of view-one must guard against fascism and racial and communal ideals on which compromise must be avoided. But even if we cherish certain ideas, and some things are basic to our identity, should we simply be debarred from questioning them? We may love and cherish our parents and friends, but in case they quarrel with others, would it be wrong to want to hear the other’s point of view? It need not mean condemning our parents or friends. Similarly, we can raise questions about the limits of concepts like secularism and democracy even while not invalidating them. But when we raise those questions, need the language and tone be acrimonious-the language of combat, rude and offensive?

The rights and wrongs of free expression are not absolute; what may be right today, or wrong, may not be the same tomorrow. Perspectives change, social values change; free expression of ideas can change those values, and one can only hope the change is for the better.

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Topic: WTO & Indian Agriculture

India is one of the founding members of WTO which came into existence on January 0 replacing GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and promising the herald of new era in the rule based system of governing and promoting international trade concomitant with the needs of the on-going process of globalization. WTO provisions related to international trade are now similarly applicable to agriculture which was brought within the fold of GATT in the Uruguay Round (1986-93) of Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTNs). Application of WTO provisions on agriculture involves many contentious issues and is an area of serious concern for developing countries which are primarily agrarian economies. Moreover, the world, despite growing interdependence and integration, is highly heterogeneous with regard to levels of development. This heterogeneity is very much noticeable when we compare the agricultural sector of developed and developing countries. Support infrastructure like storage, processing, finance, marketing, transport and R&D facilities are much more advanced and organized. In sharp contrast, in a country like India. for millions of farmers who derive their livelihood from agricultural, it is still a way of life and not an occupation they have chosen for themselves. Indian farmers are mostly involved in subsistence farming with very little or no marketable surplus. On the other hand, there have veeb instances where in the USA farmers have been given subsidies worth millions of dollars to keep their farmland uncultivated. In India 70% of the holdings are not of the economic size, staking application of modern technology difficult and unaffordable for the farmers.

The developed countries like the USA. Japan and EU countries heavily subsidize their agriculture with high quality standards and aggressive marketing practices, these countries hold 72% share of world trade in agricultural products and keep the developing countries virtually at the periphery of world market. The salient features of this agreement include three stain provisions which have become effective since 1 Jan, 2000. Under market access all non-tariff barriers like quota will be converted into tariffs. India has already removed quantitative restriction on all her imports. It has now imposed protective tariff on imports of sensitive agricultural products in order to protect the interest of its farming community. As far as the maximum limit of tariff is concerned no country is permitted to impose tariff beyond a certain limit. All industrialization countries are to reduce tariff by 36% within six years. For individual agricultural products tariff has to be reduced by at least 15%. Developing countries like India have to reduce tariff by 24% within 10 years. On any individual agro product tariff cut has to be at least by 10%.

Under Export Competition the developed-countries are to reduce the value of direct export subsidies by 36% over a period of six years and in volume terms by 21%. The base period for

these cuts is 1986-90 or 91-92 if exports were higher in that period. Over the same period the developing countries are to reduce the value of direct export subsidies by 24% and in volume terms by 10%. Under domestic support this issue is linked to providing state support to farmers in farm production. Under AoA (Agreement on Agriculture) the developed countries are to reduce AMBER BOX subsidies within 6 years by 20C starting from 1995 with 1986-88 periods as base. The same has to be reduced by 13C within 10 years by developing countries. AoA has classified all subsidies given to farmers into three categories ABER BOX subsidies, BLUE BOX subsidies and GREEN BOX subsidies. Under AMBER box subsidies such domestic support its included which is meant to encourage farmers to produce more. BLUE BOX subsidies are related to quantum of output and hence are considered minimally trade distorting. Such subsidy is provided only upto certain limit of production. GREEN BOX subsidies produce no adverse effects either on production or on trade. Direct financial aid to farmers comes under this category. The developed countries have used provisions of AoA to further the interest of their farmers.

The developed countries have used provisions of AoA to further the interest of their farmers. For example, they have remodeled AMBER BOX subsidies in such a way that these quality to be put into BLUE or GREEN BOX subsidies. These countries are constantaly pressuring the developing countries for greater market access for agricultural products but are not willing to bring down the level support that they provide to their own farmers. Developing countries like India feel that they are being discriminated against in matters like tariff on food imports into developed countries. For example, in the name of mutual access, OECD countries impose very low tariff on imports from fellow members while similar imports from developing countries are subjected to higher tariffs.

The Nov. 2001 Doha round of Ministerial talks were termed as “Development Round” because comprehensive development of the accepted as its agenda. Theoretically, issues like production and trade of agriculture products along with domestic support and subsidy to it, compliance issues, intellectual property rights, special discriminatory practices and market access were to be discussed. But soon it became clear that on the ground developed countries were not willing to yield much to the developing countries for deeper market access. By the termination of this round it was clear that issue related to agriculture pushed other issues to the background. For the developing countries safeguarding the interest of their farming sector is a matter related to the very survival and sustenance of their population. Moreover in a representative democracy like ours it would be a political hara-kiri if the government ignores the interests of farmers and agriculture under international compulsions.

In the Doha round of negotiations, while the developed countries were mainly concerned about issues like market access and IPR, the developing countres were concerned about food security, proverty elimination and economic growth with respect to the process of globalization. It is alleged by developing countries that the developed world shows only hypocritical concern about these issues. In the farm bill in the USA and the collective farming policy in EU, greater support has been promised to the farmers than before. Sensing a major deadlock in future rounds of discussions on AoA, the Agriculture Ministers of EU countries presented a reconciliatory package in the last week of June 2003. In this they promised not to offer any subsidy to their farmers but insisted that agricultural income would still be protected. This is a wily move as it replaces a trade distorting measure like subsidy by protection of agriculture income which will not be treated as trade distroing and hence qualifies to be put in the GREEN BOX. It would be a misnomer to call such protection as minimally trade distorting because it will influence the allocation of recousers in the scnce that in the absence of such protection fewer resources would be committed to agriculture protection will serve as an incetive not to move resources away from agriculture leading to over production this surplus produce will be used to disallow imports from the developing world or for dumping in the world market. The worst aspect of this package was that not even a mention of reducing export susidy found place in it.

The Ministerial meet at Cancun in Mexcio held on 10-14 Sep. 2003 raised questions on the working of the whole apparatus of WTO. The only major achievement on the part of the developing countries was that they did not succumb to the pressures of the developed countries. As expected the Cancun meet too was focused on agriculture G-5 group countries with India, China, Brazil, Agrentina and South Africa as its members emphasized the urgency of the need to reduce farm subsidy in the developed countries especially in the USA and EU countries. India played a pro-active role in this initiative. It was highlighted that the cotton export dependent economies of the world like Chad, Benin, Male and Burkina Faso have suffered massively due to the farm subsidy that the USA gives to its 25,000 cotton growers.

Even Australia and New Zealand supported the stand taken by the G-21 Group of the developing countries. The revised draft presented for negotiations was heavily tilted in favour of the developed countries. It required the developing countries like India to reduce farm subsidy by 70% while EU members and the USA were required to reduce it by 41 % and 36% respectively. The revised draft was a big blow to the heightened expectation of the developing countries. At Cancun the developed countries did not yield much to the outstanding demand of the developing world but cleverly included issues like investment, competition, trade facility and government procurement to build pressure on the developing countries.

Hong-Kong ministerial conference ended in the same manner. The developing countries, led by G-5, opposed the proposals of US and European Union on the ground that they were against the interests of poor countries. Doha round talks are at the moment floundering because of the uncompromising stands adopted by players such as EU, US and G-5. The interesting part of the whole thing is not one can be said to be the main culprit because every Government involved in the WTO negotiations is squarely accountable and answerable to its constitution and population back home, which means, among other things, that no commitment can be made which will lead to weakening of the domestic support base beyond a point. Politically the issue of AoA is so sensitive that no Government. whether in the developed or the developing countries, is in a position to compromise with the interests of farmers in the name of collectivism.

Now the question arises that what should be India's strategy? As things stand at present, the provisions of AoA do not appear to have a threatening impact on Indian Agriculture. So India need not lose its sleep over the stipulations to reduce domestic support and export subsidy under AoA. The non-product specific support amounts to 7.5% of the value of agriculture production in India. Since product specific support is negative, the Aggregate Measure of Support to Indian agriculture is still below the deminimise of 10 percent in terms of the Uruguay round stipulations. India has already suggested that AMS be calculated as the sum of the product specific and non-product specific support (WTO 2001). As the input subsides to resource-poor farmers are exempt from reduction commitments under WTO (these come under non product specific support), so the overall level of support given to Indian Agriculture is less than the minimum of 10% as set under WTO stipulations. Agriculture sector in India has responded positively to the launching of macroeconomic reforms in 1991. With liberalization of exchange rate, the terms of trade for agriculture have shown a significant improvement. Private investment in agriculture registered a step rise in the post-reform period. For the first time since independence India has become a net exporter of foodgrains. The fear that liberalisation of imports would lead to massive influx of agriculture imports too has been found to be misplaced. Quantitative restrictions on imports have been lifted since April 2000. Though imports like fruits, ketchup and meat products have increased, they still account for a miniscule of total agricultural imports.

Though there is clearly a need to be constantly vigilant and work in league with other developing countries like China and Brazil for greater market access into developed countries and removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, the major challenges to Indian agriculture come from within. To counter the cleverly crafted strategy of the developed countries at WTO, we need to take measures which make Indian agriculture more competitive. The fortunes of Indian agriculture which now accounts for about 20% of the GDP and provides employment to about 60% of

labour force crucially depend upon greater investment, both private and public, in irrigation, power, roads and the ability of agriculturists to access the modern technology specially the yield augmenting technology. Conditions need to be created for widespread diffusion and application of this technology by the farm sector.

To conclude, it can be said that WTO provisions pose no real threat to India agriculture though aspects related to IPR, removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and market access need to be dealt with constant vigil and suitable expertise. Relevant institutional and legal changes (like in patenting) need to be brought about Equally import is the need to restructure, modify and revamp our agriculture sector so that it can rise up to the challenges thrown by growing integration with the rest of the world. The need of the time is to make it more efficient, modem, diversified and competitive. The time to engineer a second Green Revolution has arrived.

Topic: Democracy Implies Tolerance of Dissent

'Democracy' literally means 'rule by the demos' in the ancient Greek word. The term 'demos' is generally translated as 'the people' and the 'people' implies the whole population, particularly the adult population, of a tribe, a territory or a country. The entire population or the collectivity obviously comprises a multitude of individuals as units. It is well-known that no two individuals in a collectivity, mechanical or organic, can be alike, as their needs and aspirations differ even as their physical and mental compositions differ. Naturally, their views, notions, beliefs and habits are not similar and yet the concept and practice of and the rule of/by the people, however disparate, is very much in existence.

Human societies are held together by something more than convenience, calculation or the threat of punishment. There is certainly something in a state's constitution, especially in democratic states, that is permanent, never to be questioned, and that political institutions must protect and preserve. A democratic constitution is in fact far more than a writing on a piece of paper. It envisages cultural and moral loyalty to certain values. This kind of loyalty or feelings of faithfulness consists in an explicit commitment to the basic ideals that the law of the state incorporates. The power of this meta-juridical ethos reflects on the manner in which procedures work and citizens interact in their daily lives. This principle is the sovereignty of the individual, of each individual, and resulting in the sovereignty of individual political judgment. In practice, by 'the people' we mean the majority of the people. As such, in a democracy, whatever the majority decides is carried out by the entire population. This, however, does not mean that the majority is entitled to lord it over the minority. Rather, democracy thrives only on the willing co-operation of the minority and on the protection guaranteed to the rights and freedoms, and tolerance of, if not agreement with, the views and beliefs of the minorities. It leaves much scope

for dissent, i.e., there may be people who think differently from official ideas or the ideas of the majority. Dissent is not necessarily a negative concept; it offers an alternative to the prevailing ideas, institutions and system, and exists even in non-democratic systems.

The views of Boris Yeltsin were at one time expressive of dissent from the dominant and established socialist principles in what was then the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. There was always a dissenting voice against the monarchical form of government in Nepal. In a healthy, working democracy, the voice of the minority is given a full hearing, even if decision is by the majority. Debate and discussion not only clear the air, but also help to bring about a compromise. There is a certain amount of accommodation of even, opposing viewpoints.

Should the positive phenomenon of dissent be suppressed, there would be resentment and growing anger. Frustration would lead to a revolt against the established system. And finally there might be a revolution, involving great violence, bloodshed and destruction of all sorts. It is, therefore, better to tolerate expression of dissent, which would provide a ventilation of the different views and pent-up feelings, in the larger interests of democratic setup. Extremes of dissent can, however, cause havoc in any system, more so in a democracy. As such, it has always been advocated to fix a permissive limit of dissent. In a democracy, people enjoy various kinds of freedom: of economic pursuit, belief (political, religious and others), expression, association, etc. But these freedoms of an individual or group of people are not permitted to cause injury to another individual or the collectivity, or to adversely affect the social or national fabric, Fascism cannot be allowed to take roots, although some people may be tempted to support it on the grounds of dissent or as an alternative system. For if democracy is for the people, dissent that goes against the people in general must he checked. One of the vulnerable aspects of democracy is that its liberality can be taken advantage of by those very people who, in the end, subvert the system by suppressing the voice of dissent if it goes against them.

In the political arena, one can witness dissent on two levels-intra-party and inter-party. Intra-party dissent implies that though the party has a corpus of rules and discipline and a particular modus operandi, some party members may put dissenting notes to some of the provisions or may not agree with the style of functioning of the leadership. This dissent has to be accommodated by the leadership, otherwise the party will have an authoritarian image amongst the masses, or may split. At the same time, the dissent should be expressed only on the party platform, not publicly, otherwise the party will be weakened. Similarly, democracy permits the establishment and continuation of political parties of various hues and views. If the strong suppress the weak, there will come a time when a one-party rule under a dictator would be established. Thus, the democratic structure will collapse. Whenever the political parties in India showed an intolerance

of dissent, they themselves broke up or the people were forced to experience a bitter bout of authoritarianism. The Congress Party broke several times (1969,1977) and the authoritarian emergency ruled the country during 1975-77. The dissent in the Congress Party today is appropriately contained because of tolerance. The existence of various parties like Bharatiya Janata Party, the Samajwadi Party Dal, the Communist parties and other national and regional parties clearly manifest the requisite tolerance of different points of view.

People in a democracy have freedom of vocation and economic pursuit to earn their livelihood. And this results in various vocations. Here, too, dissent may appear, more specifically regarding the macro-economic policy. For example, some may advocate liberalisation, others mixed economy or capitalism while yet others support nationalisation and the socialistic approach. All the dissenting views have to be tolerated and given a hearing, even if not entirely accommodated within the official view. It is respect for opposing viewpoints that prompts ministers and official spokesmen to clarify or sometimes even modify policies and programmes, facilitating a wider plan of action. In a democratic society, one group or class may differ in its form and structure from the majority. But the majority should not interfere in that form or structure or resort to value judgements. As human nature has it, every form end composition of a social group is found comfortable by its members and any forcible attempt from outside to alter it would defeat the very objective of democracy. Should aparticular group of Kerala or the North-East be asked to change its matrilineal form of family just because it does not conform with “mainstream” practice? Can democracy be valued if anyone tries to impose the social norms of one group upon other groups? ‘Live and let live’ is a basic principle of democracy.

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The constitutional morality of democratic society also establishes limits for tolerance, pluralism and freedom to dissent. In a constitutional democracy each individual is guaranteed the legal freedom to also challenge its fundamental principles. However, while the constitution defends the right to dissent, citizens and society must be able to and capable of developing civil sentiments that do not destroy the social fabric. Moral limitations of individual freedom and tolerance guaranteed by the democratic constitution are, or should be, intrinsic to the ethos pervading democracy itself. This ethos hinges on the individual as a primary asset and implies an essentially Socratic habit of the mind. At its centre there is the person, not simply as a rational agent moved by preferences, but as an individual who has the right to ask for explanations for the obedience owed to the laws of the state. It is no coincidence that democratic deliberative institutions are organised on the premise of free debate and training the public's free will and judgement thanks to the free circulation of ideas and pluralism of information, and finally, through freedom of association and the right to express personal opinions. The democratic citizen, on whose vote the legitimacy of the entire political mechanism rests, is called upon to reason using his own brain (and to vote in solitude and as an individual), and associate with others to exchange information and opinions, to change his or her mind and then change it again, if necessary. Finally, the democratic citizen is also called upon to challenge those in power. Democratic deliberating institutions are basically organised so as to gradually educate citizens to understand that they can change their minds and give value to their right to question authorities and ask why they must obey or share or believe, as well as finally rendering accountable those who in their name govern or sit in parliament.

The sovereignty of individual judgment is the principle that justifies democratic government that is government by debate and it is the fixed point (what people agree to hold "as sacred") holding together democratic society. As a shared acknowledgement, it is beyond discussion. This is not simply a principle of private morality but a value that provides democracy with its own ethical specificity. Above all, it is not an abstract principle or a metaphysical rule, but is instead the gradual acquisition of civilisation, inherent to human history in its fundamentals and thus capable of becoming deeply rooted in the depths of the psyche as if becoming a moral garment or common sense.

In democratic society the value of individuality acquires moral legitimacy and judicial codification because of the existence of relationships between individuals as relationships of equality between different people. It is expressed in an ethical form (as feelings of partiality and cooperation) and in a legal form (as the right to individual freedom and political and social equality). Together, these two aspects compose what can be called a democratic moral constitution. In a representative democracy, this moral constitution permeates and orients

citizens' deliberative competence, and simultaneously protects political and legal order from the illiberal inclinations of powerful and arrogant majorities as well as anti-egalitarian inclinations resulting from economic and corporative interests.

As one can easily sense, the individual's sovereignty and dissent are inseparable within a democratic society. Not only or simply because dissent works in the anti-authoritarian sense or as the majority's reaction to power; precisely because democratic ethics are of a Socratic kind, self-culture is a public and private virtue for individuals. Since democratic legitimacy is based on consensus (never to be confused with consensualism or conformism), autonomy of judgement and reciprocal respect of ideas, dissent is a constitutive virtue of democracy. Rather than corroding social ideals, as authoritarians and conservatives believe, it strengthens partiality and cooperation between citizens. A free public discussion and dissent strengthens the commitment and beliefs of individuals, because, as everyone knows only too well, we discuss and have a passion for the things we love and to which are linked by bonds deeper than rational assent and principles. Dissent reveals a fundamental loyalty to a country, a society or a community. Even a religious community founded on obedience to dogmas and the hierarchy not open to appeal of an interpretative authority, such as the Catholic Church, very probably prefers active and spiritually vivacious believers to those who are apathetic and passive.

Dissent mitigates the tendency to cultural uniformity inherent to democratic society and strengthens acceptance of majority rule as a method for making decisions based on the acknowledgment of the equal fallibility of citizens. Having equal rights to review opinions and decisions is the same as acknowledging that no one is infallible and can therefore demand to have irrefutable opinions. It is no coincidence that Albert Hirschman defined the attitude of those attempting to "win an argument rather than... listening and discovering that one can at times learn something from others" as that of someone with a predisposition for authoritarian rather than democratic policies.

Instead, precisely because the measure of democracy lies in opinions and not in the truth, dissent is not an indication of subversion or disharmony; on the contrary it is a sign of humble acknowledgment that every decision can become the object of revision, even that which is accepted and voted by a vast majority. Democracy is the only form of government conceived so as to result in a constant process of amending laws or decisions taken without jeopardizing the stability of civil and legal order. Dissent is hence set within the decision-making process.

It is one of its fundamental elements. One can therefore join John Stuart Mill in saying that "formidable evil" is not in "conflict ... between parts of the truth", but instead in the "quiet suppression of half-truths."

Although the critics of democracy have often emphasised the conformist temptation of the political model, the principle of the individual's sovereignty does not at all undersign an ideal of a harmonious society, but rather a society that learns how to regulate dissent without using force, using procedures for solving conflict through a free debate.

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Topic: Privatization of Education in India

The wave of privatization is sweeping across the world. Within an economy, it is aimed at breaking the monopoly of the public sector in a number of areas, more especially areas connected with infrastructure. The essence of privatization lies in the induction of private ownership in publicly owned enterprises. This can range from total denationalization to various degrees of private ownership in tile form of joint ventures. This is the narrow sense in which the concept is used. But in a broader sense, it connotes besides private ownership. Introduction of private management and control in public enterprises. The process involves the private sector in the ownership or operation of a state owned enterprise. Since the impact of privatization is penetrating all sectors of the economy it is bound to affect education sector as well. The question arises: Why is privatization being recommended in education.

Firstly, it is alleged that the policies followed in India under the Nehru Mahalanobis Model placed excessive responsibility for the expansion and development of education on the state. Consequently, the expansion and establishment of education institutions and facilities have been shouldered mainly by the State. At the elementary levels of education, the state-sponsored schools have been responsible for the spread of literacy, more especially in rural areas, but even in urban areas, hulk of the schools are state run or aided by the state. At the level of secondary, higher secondary and the college and university as well, public sector has played a dominant role in the development of education system.

A stage has now come when the state is finding it very difficult to meet the democratic aspirations of the people for further expansion of educational system due to paucity of resources. because the demand for funds for the educational sector has to compete with the demand for resources for the other sector. It is, therefore, being felt that the private sector be inducted in education so that it can share the burdens of the State in funding education.

Secondly, the expansion of the horizons of knowledge is taking place at a rapid pace all over the world; the underdeveloped economies must keep pace with this explosion of knowledge. Emphasizing this point the World Dank has stated: “Today knowledge explosion is dividing the world into fast moving, rich economies that use knowledge effectively and slow moving, poor economies that do not.” Education or knowledge industry is becoming a key factor in the process of development.This being so, education is no longer viewed as a social service, it is considered a necessary economic input and as such investment in education is treated as a factor contributory to human resources development. In this effort towards human resource development, the private sector is also expected to play its part since it is a major beneficiary of the knowledge industry.

Thirdly, according to W.W. Rostow, the world is passing through the fourth Industrial Revolution (1985). This encompasses genetics, communications, robots, lasers and new

industrial material and the various tools and products incorporating the micro chip. The growth of Satellite TV and the developments in computer technology have further escalated the information revolution. These technological developments have increased the requirements of highly educated and well-trained technical manpower.

The public sector is hampered by lack of resources and cannot meet the needs of industry and other sectors of the economy. Therefore, the private sector must be initiated in the programmes of training skilled manpower to take advantage of hi-tech opportunities.

Fourthly, privatization can respond more promptly and efficiently than the public sector which is hamstrung with structural and operational inflexibilities to market signals or market demand for labour and take effective steps to promote human resource development to keep pace with the emerging requirements.

Fifthly, over the years, the public sector has failed to generate resources from the recipients of education. Education has become more or less a free public service. This has devalued education in the eyes of the recipients. Privatization, by charging the full cost or a substantial portion of the cost and at times, by charging cost-plus pricing for the service provided is likely to generate greater responsibility among the recipients of education i.e., the students. As a consequence. students are likely to insist on greater efficiency in teaching and improvement in its quality. Lastly, privatization, by generating more resources from student fees, will help to reduce fiscal burden on the Government.

The major components of privatization of education include the following: Establishment, in the private sector of institutions imparting education and skills viz., schools, colleges, polytechnics, research laboratories, professional colleges in agriculture, engineering, medicine, management etc. Withdrawal of subsidies by introducing full costing in the individual and the institutional domain. In case this is not possible all at once introducing a system of gradual withdrawal of subsidies by increasing fees over a time and in the interregnum, continuing a declining scale of state support. To introduce the culture of private organization by granting the management the right to hire and fire academic and other supporting staff. To grant the right to the management to start or stop courses in response to market signals. To persuade the users of the output of educational institutions to contribute towards the funding of educational expenditure. In India, the privatization of education has been taking place at the school level without much resistance. A dual system has come to be established at various levels of school education. In the public sector, we have primary, secondary and senior secondary schools which impart instruction

through the mother tongue at the primary stage and thereafter, English is introduced as a language along with other subjects.

Up to the 10th standard, all children have a common syllabus. Thereafter, they go in for specialization in different areas at the higher secondary level. The fee charged in these schools is very nominal. Thus a very large number of students coining from low income groups can afford instruction in these schools.

As against these schools which are directly under the management and control of the state, we have schools run in the private sector which in popular parlance are called “public schools’—a misnomer, because most of these schools are established and run by private entrepreneurs in education, on commercial lines. These schools impart instruction through the medium of the English language. They charge very high fees which cover not only the current cost of education but also contribute towards the cost of buildings and other equipment. The educational entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the high demand for education in English medium schools, generally get land allotted at a nominal cost in the name of some educational society formed for the purpose. In the initial stages, some temporary structures are put up. Later on, as students are admitted, funds begin to flow in the name of development fee, building fee, tuition fee, games fee, cultural programmes fee etc. These institutions charge cost plus pricing for the services rendered by them.

Since they are unaided schools and do not receive any grant from the Government, they pay very low salaries to their academics and other staff. The prevalence of high degree of unemployment helps them to recruit qualified staff which works under a rigid discipline and is liable to summary removal at the will of the management. The high degree of insecurity of service enables the management to extract the maximum output from the staff. Some of the schools functioning under the auspices of reputed educational denominations do pay better salaries and pay scales, but even these do not compare favourably with the State-run schools. Over a period of time, these schools are able to construct huge buildings and purchase costly equipment to modernize their establishments. In this way, a large percentage of unaided private schools have converted education into business enterprise. Earlier these schools were confined to metropolitan areas and big cities, but now they are spreading even to smaller towns.

Even the charitable trusts like the DAV managements, Khalsa Dewan, Gurudwara Prabandhak Committees, Sanatan Dharam Foundation, etc. which initially were motivated by the urge to impart instruction in Indian languages and propagate Indian culture have been swept off their ideological postures by the entrepreneurial pragmatism of privatization. However, they continue to use the trade-marks of their religious or social organization to get concessions and facilities, especially land at throw away prices from the Government.

A distinction has to be made between privatization and commercialization of education. India has a long tradition of private effort in higher education. Tilak, Maharishi Karve. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, DAV Trusts, Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Khalsa Dewan, Jamia Milia Islamia and many other charitable trusts started educational institutions to widen educational opportunity in the society. But modern educational entrepreneurs are not guided by philanthropic motives of the earlier reformers, but intend to invest in educational institutions to realize higher rates of return on their investments, because the demand for professional education is very high and the risk involved in this investment minimal.

But this approach comes in conflict with Article 21 in conjunction with Article 14 of the Constitution and thus it has compelled Justice Kuldip Singh "to hold that "capitation fee, charged with the connivance or permission of the State amounts to violation of the right to equality." Thus both from the point of view of accentuating social inequality and resultant adverse effects on educational standards, the decision of the Andhra Pradesh Government to permit filling up 50 per cent seats on the basis of capitation fees was held violative of the Constitution.

Article 21 enjoins on the State to enable people the right to live which has been expanded and interpreted by the Supreme Court as the right to live with dignity. Besides this, Article 41 directs the State as under: The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to education. Further, the State has been directed under Article 45 to endeavour to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years within a period of 10 years of the commencement of the Constitution. There is unanimity regarding the provision of free and compulsory education because in the theory of public finance, it is argued that primary education is an essential social good as it involves many social benefits.

In several cases, a chain of English medium schools is operated under a particular organization. Wills the passage of time, the philanthropic spirit of the founders of these organizations has been replaced by a commercial approach which legitimizes the selling of education at the highest price possible. These schools cater to the needs of the rich business class and also to the middle and the upper middle class waning desperately to transcend their present status. In other words,, the privatization of school education is rapidly churning out the children from high income groups into English medium 'public schools' while their counterparts from the poor and lower middle classes continue to go to State-run schools.

In these English medium public schools, parents pay the full cost of education (generally leaving a good profit margin for the educational entrepreneurs) while, in the state run schools, highly subsidised education is imparted in the vernacular. At the higher education level, the scenario is very different. Malcolm Adiseshaiah (1992) has classified higher education institutions in India

into four groups: those founded, funded and run by the state governments; those founded, funded and run by private agencies: those founded, and run by private agencies but funded by the government; and those founded and run by private agencies but funded partly by government and partly by non-governmental sources. Majority of the institutions in higher education belong to category ‘d’, but under pressure from teachers association, they are moving into category ‘c’.

Sudipto Mundle and M. Govinda Rao have calculated the subsidies going to education at different levels. Data reveal that since elementary education was to be provided on a free and compulsory basis as per constitutional directive the recovery was expected to be negligible. But the unfortunate fact of the educational scenario is that even at the secondary and University/higher education level, recovery cost is less than two per cent. In other words, education at all levels is practically available at a nominal cost. It may also be noted that about 74 per cent of the total subsidy (Rs 9,576 crores) finances elementary and secondary education and 19 per cent is devoted to university and higher education.Data regarding State-wise recovers rates of cost of education at various levels in 14 major states of India for 1987-88 reveal that lowest recovery rate in higher education is observed in Uttar Pradesh (0.13 percent), followed by Madhya Pradesh (9.5 per cent), Kerala (7.85 per cent) and west Bengal (7.56 per cent). However, the recovery rate of Bihar even in technical education is dismally low at 0.53 per cent. There is no doubt that some states have recently taken some strong measures to increase the recovery rate by raising tuition and other fees, but still the overall scenario that obtains in the sphere of higher education indicates that there is a considerable degree of lack of courage to raise the level of fees, even though bulk of the beneficiaries belong to the relatively upper income groups.

Dr. B Shiva Reddy has analysed the impact of subsidies on the recipients of education from the point of view of equity. For this purpose, lie has classified subsidies under two heads: General Subsidy (GS) and Specific Subsidy (SS). GS is enjoyed by all students irrespective of economic or social groups to which they belong. SS is, however, mainly aimed at students belonging to lower socioeconomic groups and hence benefiting only a specific section of student’s viz., Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Listed Backward Communities (LBCs). In 1980-81, about 22 per cent of higher education subsidy was a specific type. SS not only covers tuition fee but also other educational expenses.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment on the Mohini Jain Vs. the Government of Karnataka case, declared in 1992 that the right to education was a fundamental right and that the charging of capitation fee was arbitrary, unfair and, therefore, violative of the fundamental right to equality contained in Article 14 of the Constitution. Mohini Jain, the petitioner in the case, was admitted to the medical college in Karnataka, but site could not take advantage of admission as she could not pay Rs 60,000 per year as capitation fee.

There is no doubt that fees at state-run medical colleges are pitifully low and, therefore, they subsidize education of the more affluent sections of our society and thus there is a case for raising fees in such institutions, but this does not entitle the private entrepreneurs in education to charge such heavy capitation fees that it virtually denies equality of opportunity, to the poor for professional education. S.P. Sathe has rightly argued: “If access to such professions is available on merit, respect for meritocracy is enhanced. On the other hand, if one can have access to these professions on money power, it would lead to further denigration of merit as a value

Consequently, the State may allow private institutions to provide education but such institutions have to be subjected to control of the state and have to conform to what the Constitution of India enjoins. Privatization of education if comes in conflict with the equity objective, state intervention would be desirable. This is precisely the import of the Supreme Court judgment. Antartya Sen also pleads for state intervention in health, education and social security. To quote, Antartya Sen: “Given the limitations of market-based allocation of health services. education and social security, it is not surprising that the market-relevant economies, even when very rich, frequently have lower achievement in terms of standard indicators of quality of life than poor economies making better use of public delivery of health care, education and social insurance.”

It is also held that taking into account the widespread social benefits of literacy, the rate of return on primary education is the highest. But higher education is also a merit good because it enhances the capabilities and efficiency of the citizens. It is, therefore, incumbent on the State to ensure that higher education is provided to meet the demands of competent and skilled manpower. The state should ensure that the entitlement to higher education is based on the principle of merit, rather than the capacity to afford. It is this aspect of higher education that has compelled the Supreme Court to declare right to education as a fundamental right even in sphere of higher education.

Since all fundamental rights are enforceable only against the state, how is it that the Supreme Court struck down the legislative sanction provided by the Andhra Pradesh Assembly to charge capitation fees by the private entrepreneurs of education? Explaining this riddle, E.Nagasaila and VSuresh clarify: “It is only because the SC held that there is a fundamental right to education and the state is duty-bound to provide the same, and any private venture in the field of education can be only by way of delegation of the state’s duty, could the charging of capitation fees be struck down as being arbitrary and hence violative of Article 14 which guarantees equality to all citizens. If the state’s duty to provide education at all levels is not recognized, then the private entrepreneurs are under no obligation to act either fairly or in accordance with larger goals of the Constitution and would be quite justified in having profit as the only motive in running education institutions.”

In the theory of privatization as applicable to industry, the firms have been insisting on an exit policy and their inalienable right to hire and fire staff, their right to stop the production of a product which no longer enables the firm to earn profit or even the right to close the unit if it becomes sick. The question in the privatization of education is: Would it be possible or desirable to grant this right to private entrepreneurs of education? Finally, the right to hire and fire staff existed in the pre-independence period in educational institutions run by the private trusts and this led to ruthless exploitation of both teaching and non teaching staff.

It was precisely this policy of hire and fire which led to the development of teachers organisation and gave them the characteristics of trade unions. As a consequence, they were able to win the right of security of service. The pendulum seems to have swung to the other extreme and this absolute security of service is the cause of serious deterioration in work ethics.

In our country, the corporate sector is the biggest user of educated manpower, but is not prepared to contribute anything to the higher education sector. This is in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing in developed countries where the Universities receive substantial support from the corporate sector by way of grants. Either the corporate sector itself starts funding higher education as a matter of policy, or alternatively the state should impose education cess out the corporate sector so that a certain portion of its gross profits is utilized to fund higher education. This education cess should be a kind of surcharge so that it cannot be evaded. Ramamurti Committee is unnecessarily apprehensive of the resistance by the employers not to employ graduates. The kind of manpower needed today due to the electronics revolution needs much highly skilled and educated manpower and persons trained in professional education. Such a fear therefore appears to be unfounded.

Universities/Higher Education institutions can undertake Research Projects on behalf of the Corporate Sector (both the public and the private corporate sector). A part of the Research Project funds can be used to supplement the deficit of the Institutions or to create suitable infrastructures in the form of research laboratories, computer facilities, and libraries to conduct research in a competent manner.

Obviously, as the development of the society takes on rapid strides and the economic capacity of the state is enlarged, it is obligatory on the part of the state to allocate more resources to education with a view to (a) provide free and compulsory elementary education to all children up to 14 years of age, (b) to provide secondary and higher education to more and more of its citizens so that they can exercise their right to live with dignity, and (c) that the state shall endeavour to provide equality of opportunity among not only individuals of opportunity but also groups of individual suffering from various disabilities such as that of caste, sex, economic and social deprivation etc.

On the question of privatization, it would be relevant to consider the forms of privatization: Zero privatization of education with total responsibility to be taken over by the State at all levels. Mild privatization of education and by gradually increasing recovery cost of education by way of fees to 50 per cent level. The remaining cost should be subsidized by the state. Intensive privatization by insisting that at least 75 per cent cost be covered by student fees and employers' contribution. Total privatization with total freedom to private sector to establish educational institutions and recover full cost from the beneficiaries or even charge cost plus pricing and generate profit from investment in education.

Out of these forms, the first and the last option cannot be considered as feasible, since in a mixed economy, it is neither feasible not desirable to depend exclusively either on the public sector to expand the capacity of public sector institutions to fully meet the needs of the economy, nor is it possible forr the private sector to cater to total societal needs. There is no doubt that the public sector institutions both at the school and the College 'University level have a much better record of responding to the social needs of SCs and STs and other backward sections of the society than the private sector institutions.

It is, therefore, necessary that state intervention be increased in private sector institutions to increase the quota of seats to the poor and deprived sections. This can be made applicable to private sector institutions which receive government assistance to cover their deficits.

Even in fully financed private sector institutions as per the Supreme Court Judgment, education is a fundamental right and no institution can be permitted to charge a capitation fee which denies admission on the basis of merit Sand permits higher education/professional education on the strength of money power. The state must enact suitable legislation to impose reasonable restrictions on such institutions consistent with the goals enunciated in Article 21, Article 41 and Article 45 of our Constitution. y

While framing legislation, it has to be ensured that privatization does not degenerate into commercialization of education. With this end in view, a system of grant of freeships for the economically weaker sections of society has to be built in and reinforced. Private sector institutions should also take affirmative action to help the weaker sections to acquire professional/higher education which is otherwise not within the reach of the society.

For nearly four decades, fees in higher education have remained stagnant at 1950-51 levels and thus the share of fees has come down to only five per cent of total educational expenditure. In the Universities, it is less than one per cent. The state has been caving in due to the pressure of organised student unions dominated by student leaders belonging to affluent parents. This trend needs to be reversed. In the course of the next 10 years, fees as a component of total recurring

expenditure should contributed at least 25 per cent of total expenditure. Such stipulation should be made contingent for the receipt of grants. This requires a phased programme of raising fees.

The Acharya Ramamurti Committee has Reviewed the National Policy of Education (1986), in its report towards an Enlightened and Humane Society (1990) mentions: "Though education has been in the Concurrent List in the Constitution since 1976, it remains primarily a state activity. Bulk of the investments is made by the state governments. Free and compulsory education is expected to be provided by the States for all children up to 14 years of age. In most states, education is free in the entire school stage. Up to class XII education is free for girls in all the states. The fee structure for higher education in the colleges and universities has virtually remained unchanged for many years. The pattern of educational development has, consequently, come to be dependent on the availability of public resources for education."

Data reveal that the share of the Government in financing education has increased from 68 per cent in 1950-51 to 85 percent in 1980-81. However, the share of fees has declined from 20.4 per cent in 1950-51 to merely 12 per cent in 1980-81.

The Ramamurti Committee (1990) made the following recommendation in this regard: "In the circumstances, a justifiable strategy is bringing about an appropriate increase in the fees payable by students going in for Higher Education. This increase should be appropriately linked to at least the cost of recurring expenditure and levels of income of the parents of the beneficiaries. The richest quartile of the people can be a 75 per cent of the cost of the education; the next richest quartile 50 per cent of the cost and the next richest quartile 25 percent. The last quartile of the economically weak (to be appropriately defined) need not bear ally part of the cost". Education Cess or Graduate Tax has also been suggested by the World Bank to be charged from the users of output of higher educational institutions, more especially the corporate sector. The Ramamurti Committee is very skeptical about this suggestion as it states: "Graduate taxes, if any, are to be imposed upon the beneficiaries i.e. the users of services of graduates, namely, employers. However, the employers are likely to resist imposition of such taxes on ground of economic viability of their own operations getting adversely affected. This is also likely to result in discouragement of employment of the qualified."

Although apparently, the recommendation of the Ramamurti Committee appear to be very rational as it prescribes a differential fee structure on the basis of four broad slabs, in practice it is very difficult to implement. In a country, where a small proportion of the population is engaged in salaried employment and a very small proportion pays income tax, it is quite possible that during the course of implementation. the business classes may not get caught in the net and the entire burden may be put on salary camels. A more pragmatic approach would be to prescribe a uniform system of the higher fees and within the system to, permit 25 per cent of the students

belonging to weaker sections full exemption from fees. The basic purpose of Ramamurti Committee's suggestion is to increase the recovery rate in higher education costs by reducing the element of subsidy. In that sense, the recommendation appears to be overdue.

Topic: Terrorism and World peace

All the world's religions preach the virtues of mercy and compassion, advocate numerous values of non-violence and peace-building, respect and preserve human life, and call for peace. Tragically, however, most major religions can also justify violence since their canons contain martial metaphors, and have long been associated with terrorism. Whole books of the Hebrew Bible are devoted to the conquests of great kings. In Hinduism, warfare is the basis of great religious epics such as the Mahabharata. Warfare, however, is not just confined to mythic legends. It has split over into history, with conflicts such as the Crusades, the Muslim conquests and the religious wars of the sixteenth century.

The word terrorism is a big trauma which the whole world is facing. It seems to have become a world - wide phenomenon. It has made this world a dangerous place to live in. The terrorists aim at creating fear and panic whenever they strike. Of late their activities have ruthlessly destroyed all possible chances of peace in the world. The unforgettable attack of terrorists on the world trade center shook the world for ever. No one can think of living in the peace in the awful situation.

In fact India is also not untouched by the terrorists attacks like the bomb blasts in the Mumbai and at that time when terrorists attacked the Taj Hotel and captured all innocent people and shot many tourists and also Indians shows how difficult it is to curb terrorism. there have been intensive efforts in India and in the world to fight against the terrorism but no great success so far has been achieved towards peace. But, after such a long time when the news came that Osama - bin - laden the major head of the terrorists had been shot dead by the american soldiers in Pakistan, all over the world there was happiness enjoyed by the people. at that time people were really excited and were recalling the memories of their relatives who died in that 9/11 attack and there eyes were wet at that moment.

So, at last the terrorist, somehow, have to be made aware that terrorism and violence serve no purpose. We shouldn't stop trying to work for world peace. Historically, three of the most famous examples of warring religious groups are the Hindu thugs, the Jewish zealots, and the Islamic assassins. Because the conversion of "unbelievers" was an important motivator behind the Crusades, they are regarded by some as the first example of large-scale religiously motivated terrorist acts. In reality, within every religion, there have always existed radical elements

exploiting the faith to preach hatred and violence, intolerance and exclusiveness. Religious terrorists seek to use violence to further their purportedly 'divinely commanded' purposes.

In modern times, historical moments of global transformation have provided an occasion for religion — with all its images and ideas — to be reasserted as a public force. Modern religious terrorism surfaced around 1980, a time when the ideologies were in decline. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed a failure of the secular gods, and a profound void was left for religion to fill. Modern religious terrorism very effectively married ideology to religion. In addition, during this period, many countries began to experience a great social transformation. Social and economic pressures frustrated political aspirations and, combining with bitter personal experiences, contributed to the rise of religious terrorism on the world arena. Religious violence provided a sense of empowerment to alienated individuals, marginalized groups, and visionary ideologues.

In addition, globalization creates a tremendous amount of confusion for human beings in terms of identity. In order to seek a clear identity, sometimes, some people can be drawn to religious extremist movements, including those who promote violence. In a religious terrorist group, an enjoyment of faith, a pleasure in belief, being in touch with God are clearly manifested, based on the idea that the self is at the center of religion. Hence the individual is at the core of identity.

Nowadays, religiously motivated terrorism has superseded other forms of terrorism and leads to more intense forms of violence and bloodshed. Religious terrorist groups include the Al Qaeda network, various American white supremacist militias (including the Christian Patriot movement), the Jewish Kach/Kahane Chai, the Sikh Dal Khals and Dashmesh, and Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, among others.

Currently, the term "religious terrorist" is most often applied to Islamic groups. In actual fact, however, white supremacists also pose a threat that cannot be underestimated. For instance, 760 hate groups exist in the USA with about 100,000 members. America needs to be more vigilant about the domestic white supremacists, neo-Nazis and militia members. In 2003, for example, a Texan in a militia, William Krar, was caught with 25 machine guns and other weapons, a quarter-million rounds of ammunition, 60 pipe bombs, and enough sodium cyanide to kill hundreds of people. Before September 11, America was too complacent about Al Qaeda and foreign terrorists; now, it is too unwary of homegrown threats.

In Britain too, anti-Muslim attacks supported by the white supremacist British National Party have increased. They have served to strengthen hostility against Muslims as well as "Islamophobia" among the general public. Without a doubt, religious terrorism presents a grave challenge to national, regional and international security today, and needs to be understood to be

addressed. In this regard, it is useful to be aware of the unique features that set religious terrorism apart from other forms of terrorism:

(1) Religious terrorism has its own radically different value systems, mechanisms of legitimization and justification, concepts of morality, and worldviews, according to Dr. Bruce Hoffman. For the religious terrorist, violence is first and foremost a sacramental act or divine duty executed in response to some theological demand or imperative. Terrorism thus assumes a transcendental dimension, and its perpetrators are undeterred by political, moral, or practical constraints. They seek to appeal to no other constituency than themselves. They see themselves not as components of a system worth preserving but as 'outsiders' seeking fundamental changes in the existing order. This perception enables the religious terrorist to contemplate far more destructive types of terrorist operations than secular terrorists and reinforces the tendency that anybody is a fair target.

The most extreme religious terrorists can sanction "almost limitless violence against anyone." This distortion of the teachings of religions has been most brutal and fanatical where the blood of the faith community is made sacred "by the fanatical utterances of the religiously and racially intoxicated." In the ethos of radical Islamic terrorism, for example, individuals believe in martyrdom or self-sacrifice in the service of Allah, and have no moral 'red lines' in terms of numbers of casualties and the extent of destruction they were willing to inflict. They carry out violence because the jihad must go on: "in a jihad, there are no red lines," and the extent of damage and the number of casualties are of primary importance.

Cults headed by charismatic leaders, where the leaders dominate the followers spiritually and emotionally, are usually very dangerous.

(2) The terror inflicted by the religious terrorist is not an end in itself, but a means towards a larger goal. Nor is this goal a conventional one. As the US National Commission on Terrorism put it: "Today's terrorists don't want a seat at the table, they want to destroy the table and everyone sitting at it."

Terrorists of a religious nature or motivation see themselves as answerable only to God or their idea of God. Their ultimate constituency is God. However, the pure intention of desiring to serve God becomes contaminated by the needs of the ego that arise from despair and helplessness. So, religious terrorists can be quite devout in relation to wanting to serve God but quite violent in their behavior towards others. This mixture of darkness and light, of falseness and truth, of love and hatred, and of purity of devotion combined with extreme desecration of what purity is really about, can occur within individuals who are quite spiritually focused. It is present among many who advance the cause of terrorism in the name of God.

(3) Religions mandate acts of terror as a sacred duty in an endless, cosmic struggle for the best way to please God. It is the religious worldview that the entire universe is locked in an eternal struggle. Religious terrorism has no military objective. A holy war, or jihad, is endless because it has a spiritual objective; no one ever knows when God is pleased enough, or when the situation in heaven matches the situation on earth. For this reason, religious terrorism is also most dedicated and unpredictable. Most religious terrorists are devout, fundamentalist, 'true' believers in their mainstream religion. The divine mandate for destruction is regarded as the 'neglected duty' within the mainstream religion. Religious terrorists also do not consider themselves terrorists, since they say they do not enjoy violence for the sake of violence. They regard themselves as religious activists or militants.

(4) A mindset based on binary thinking exists in many religious terror groups. Religious terrorists among Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and Christians believe in a simplistic, Manichean division of people into two groups: "the righteous" and "the unrighteous." In this dualistic world, all reality is divided into two camps: good gods and bad gods, angels and demons, good nations and evil nations, good humans and evil ones. Terrorist groups employ various forms of conceptual and emotional manipulation, such as oversimplification, deception, and mass suggestion, which routinely precede physical forms of terror. With their extensive indoctrination infrastructure, through private and isolated gatherings among members, they build strength, laying the groundwork for decades of struggle. Moreover, in today's globalized world, religion no longer has a relationship with a territory or given society, which is what we call deterritorialization. It means that religion has to define itself solely in terms of religion. It has to define itself in comparison with all "others" – other religions, other values, other environments. This further consolidates religious extremist binary thinking.

(5) Religious terrorists tend to fight with determination and spirit. They stick to their aims with persistence. Religious agendas can inspire deep emotional responses and therefore result in dedicated actions. Such agendas can create anger and a readiness to sacrifice the self in the fight against enemies, who are seen to have been transformed into devils. Religious terrorism is about belief. It needs very little in the way of financing to accomplish its individual missions. The religious zealots appear to be quite happy to sacrifice their own lives.

(6) Religious terrorism encourages extra-territorial loyalty, holding that loyalty to religious solidarity among followers overrides loyalty due to the nation-state of which the followers are citizens. Religious terrorism does not recognize national borders. There is no territory followers must protect. Such terrorism is thus subversive to the traditional concept of loyalty to the state.

(7) A traditional network exists outside of law-enforcement services' surveillance. It is an informal network of person-to-person relationship. The recruitment process is predominantly a

casual or informal process. Members generally know their recruiter prior to recruitment. In many cases, it is a friend or acquaintance in the group who recruits a new member. For some, the recruiter is a family member, and for others, someone from the community they know casually. A small percent of members are introduced to recruiters through a third party. In fact, little actual recruitment needs to be carried out, as most members volunteer. The network grows organically, rather like the Internet.

(8) Religious terrorists have internalized their values. They are 'true believers' who subordinate their individuality to the group. They uncritically accept the direction of the destructive charismatic leader of the organization: to them, what he declares as moral is moral, and indeed a sacred obligation.

(9) Many religious terrorists have received higher education, such as graduate training at the technological universities of the West. Most come from financially comfortable middle class families. For instance, three-quarters of Al Qaeda members belong to the upper or middle class of their societies and six-three percent have attended college; in many aspects, they are the best and brightest of their societies. Three-quarters of them are professionals or semi-professionals, including engineers, architects, and civil engineers, and mostly scientists. In their education, the natural sciences predominate. They are skilled in computer technology. They speak three to six languages. Most of us don't know Arabic: these men know two or three Western languages, including German, French, and English.

(10) Religious terrorism uses intimidation and ideological and physical terror as weapons to make its will prevail. For the terrorists, religion is a weapon of coercion and intimidation with which to subjugate the 'infidels and the non-practicing persons.' In March 1995, the Aum Shinrikyo attacked Tokyo's subways with sarin, killing 12 and injuring more than 5,000 with the lethal gas. The incident was the world's first mass-scale chemical terrorist attack. The group had built a vast arsenal of biochemical and conventional arms, including mustard gas, anthrax, botulism, Q-fever, sarin and TNT. It also experimented with seismic weapons designed to trigger cataclysmic earthquakes in Japan.

(11) Religious terrorists never have to win a battle and can instead profit in the realm of public opinion through the glory that their martyrdom confers on them even in their defeat. We think the struggle is fought on the ground, but they know the struggle is really fought on satellite TV, and they are far more sophisticated than we are in using it.

(12) Youth are the prime recruiting target of religious terror groups, because such vulnerable sincerity, fervor, hunger for action, and commitment enough to live or die for a cause is usually found only among young people. They are more readily swayed by indoctrination and

propaganda. Youthfulness is an attribute that stands out among indoctrinated men and women, whether they are Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Catholic or Protestant, or belong to new religious groups such as the People's Temple in the US and in Guyana.

(13) Terrorism today is fueled by three broad forces: the openness of free societies; the easy access to technologies of violence; and a radical and global ideology of hatred. It can be stopped only by responses at each level.

What the world is now confronting is asymmetric warfare. The key challenges entailed in this war are outlined below:

Religious terrorism, in one form or another, has been around for centuries and will be around for many more. A challenge in countering religious terrorism is that the threat and the problems that fuel it can never be completely eradicated. The complexity, diversity, and often idiosyncratic characteristics of modern religious terrorism imply that there is no "magic bullet" — no single, superior solution — that can be applied to all cases. As mentioned above, religious terrorists have religious fervor, confidence, knowledge, discipline and expertise to embark on terrorist attacks. They have also learned to find the vulnerabilities in civil society. Hence, there is a need for multiple creative solutions, if not to resolve, then, at least, to ameliorate the underlying causes of religious terrorism as well as its violent manifestations.

In the past, ideological movements were fought to take control of states. Now the world is faced with a belief system that is inimical to the state system, and aims at the theological rule. This system will not be countered by the same means that worked against other forms of terrorism. Neither military nor political solutions seem to be effective. Ceasefires, political concessions, financial rewards, amnesties and other personal inducements would be futile. A new set of institutions will be needed to grapple with this reality, and new training methods developed to understand a people who are uninterested in national self-interest as traditionally defined. The fact should be faced that a long struggle lies ahead. Roaming in nature, they are more globalized than the worldwide law enforcements. Members of terrorist groups come from every corner of the world, while states cannot realize this diversity. Actually, the jihadist movement, initially based locally, has become international in nature, in terms of both its members and the diversified objectives that it pursues. Religious terrorist groups, like other global movements, its diverse membership is not united by way of commonality about class, ethnicity or personal background. Indeed it functions as a network by disrupting and disregarding old-fashioned forms of political and territorial allegiance. These globalized terrorist groups have realized their effective composition of manpower and resources worldwide, while the law enforcements cannot reach this level because of existing national interests, territorial borders, and barriers of law.

Religious terrorist groups operate in “horizontal network” and in a traditional, non-technical world of family and tribe and decentralized, socially based authority, while the states work in “vertical system” and in a technical, centralized bureaucratic world. In this respect, the state has only limited ability to affect these social relationships as well as to understand or influence traditional communication.

Winning the war is dependent on knowing the secrets of religious terror groups, and therefore espionage and information gathering are extremely important. So far, all we have been able to do, mainly, is to gauge what has happened in the past. While governments are in the open, their terrorist foes are hidden. The foes have open access to information about governments, through sources such as the mass media, but their own activities cannot be watched so easily. Because of their unique behavior, close and religious nature, and reliance on individual relationships, terrorist groups are extremely difficult for law enforcement agencies to infiltrate; it is therefore hard to preempt their attacks. Usually, law enforcement agencies cannot identify culprits until the first attack has been perpetrated. Thus, after investigating the Arm attack, a US Senate investigative report asked, “How does a fanatic intent on creating Armageddon, with relatively unlimited funds and a world-wide network of operatives, escape notice of Western intelligence and law-enforcement agencies outside of Japan?” The answer was alarming: “They simply were not on anybody’s radar screen.” The intense dedication of religious terrorists and their unpredictability create yet more difficulties for governments to counter their attacks.

Religious terrorists are very hard to identify as individuals. Mostly, they melt into local society and may be quietly installed in any metropolitan city. Appearing normal, socially well-adjusted, and without any crime records, they easily escape the suspicions and surveillance of security services. Finding suspects is the top priority for law enforcement services, but the dilemma, as acknowledged by Canadian Deputy Prime Minister John Manley in an interview, is: “You can’t know what you don’t know. You can only hope you catch what you need to catch.” Pierre de Bousquet, the head of France’s counterintelligence service, says, “They do not seem suspicious. They work. They have kids. They have fixed addresses. They pay the rent.” According to Dr. Bruce Hoffman, “The members of these groups are not full-time, professional terrorists…but consider themselves minutemen: ordinary citizens and patriots ready to take up arms at a moment’s notice to defend their inalienable rights.”

The greatest fear for most analysts is that weapons of mass destruction might fall into the hands of religious terrorists — who have no fear of destroying themselves and everybody else in the process. Regrettably, the threat is only too real. As Dr. Bruce Hoffman stated — as far back as in 1995 — following the Aum gas attack in Tokyo, “We’ve definitely crossed a threshold. This is the cutting edge of hi-tech terrorism for the year 2000 and beyond.”

Additional Essays on Terrorism The Problem of Terrorism in India

Increasingly, in the last decade or so, violence has pervaded Indian politics. It has found various forms-from shrill and abusive language and character assassination of opponents to casteist and communal violence and from booth capturing to physical attacks on the oppressed (agricultural labourers, dalits, tribal's and women) who try to raise themselves and actualize the promises of equality and equal opportunity embodied in our Constitution. But, above all, violence has taken the form of organized and large-scale terrorism.

Terrorism has become endemic in India since early 1980s. We have not been able to check it or contain it. What is worse, we have failed to make it politically illegitimate. When a major assassination occurs, we use words such as brutal, barbaric and heinous to describe the act, but in more normal times, we treat it as if it is business as usual.

In our approach to terrorism we fail to distinguish it from the use of violence or armed struggle in a revolutionary situation. There is a vast difference between violence in a democratic society, where venues of peaceful protest as also political change through electoral processes exist, and an authoritarian dictatorial society where the people have no choice but to overthrow the political regime through use of weapons. But even in the latter society, violence takes the form of mass upsurge or armed struggle based on massive political support and mobilization.

Terrorism at a serious and dangerous level arises in a democratic society when an organized group is convinced of its own political righteousness and yet finds itself unable to acquire political power democratically because it is unable to persuade the majority to back it either in terms of mass mobilization or ultimately, in terms of electoral support.

In 1946-47, the communal riots and the partition had funneled communalism from Pakistan. The Muslim communalists had risen to power. In northern India Hindu Communalism had grown in geometrical proportions. But the national leadership and. above all. Gandhiji had rolled back the tide. The frustrated communal forces had hit back through the agency of Nathuram Godse. The atmosphere of hatred and violence was sufficient explanation of the dastardly act.

Similarly, in the late I 970s, the Akalis found themselves at the end of their tether. All their communal demands, including the most unreasonable ones. had been satisfied. The population ratios and therefore electoral logic in Punjab- 40 percent being Hindus and 38 per cent or so of the Sikhs being scheduled caste agricultural labourers and therefore in class conflict with the landed jats - did not favour Akalis. The Akalis were not able to even once capture state power in Punjab unless they allied with Hindu communalists. The Akali leadership faced three choices: one, abandonment of communal politics, two, an effort to unite all the Sikhs by raising the cry of Sikh religion and identity in danger and three, recourse to violence to capture state power.

The first choice was never considered. Sant Longowal and G.S.Tohra adopted the second course. Bhindramvala went in for the third course. But for a violent mass movement and armed struggle not only arms-readily available from Pakistan-were needed but also the masses. The latter were not forthcoming. And so the separatist movement degenerated into or rather remained stuck at the level of terrorism, that is, individual killings of their political opponents and thus the terrorisation of the people of Punjab and of the Indian State.

The fact is that terrorism of every type and of every origin must be stamped out at its origin and stopped in its tracks. If it continues to exist, not to speak of succeeding in a place. it is bound to spread to other places. Whosoever finds it impossible to achieve his/her objective through normal democratic/peaceful processes will take recourse to it. Today it is the terrorists in Punjab or Assam or the LTTE in Tantil Nadu. Tomorrow, when stymied in their designs in Ayodhya. the votaries of the Bajrang Dal could ape their Punjabi fascist communal counterparts. Day after tomorrow it could be the turn of the casteist fanatics, whether of the forward or backward variety. So long as we don't say, "It shall not pass" and "It shall not pass', terrorism will go on claiming victims, till it tears India apart. But the default has not been only of the political leaders. Intellectuals have been equally involved.

For one, by and large and with some exceptions, most of the vocal intellectuals, especially those with access to the media, have consistently refused to recognise the seriousness of the problem posed by violence and terrorism. Regarding Punjab, the common stance has been to find alibis for terrorism. For example, that Bhindranwala was a creation of Indira Gandhi and Zail Singh. Ergo, the problem was not Bhindranwala and terrorism but Indira Gandhi. Or, the youth in Punjab are unemployed and feeling deprived, and the answer must be found in solving their basic socio-economic problems-as if the Hindu youth or Scheduled Caste Sikh youth in Punjab are having full employment. Or, the problem is created by November1984 riots-as if Bhindranwala had nothing to do with terrorism in Punjab. Or, the real terrorism in Punjab was not perpetrated by Khalistanis but by the state, i e., the police, CRPF and other state organs.

The same disregard for reality and refusal to face up to the challenges of terrorism have been there regarding the LITE in Tamil Nadu and the ULFA in Assam which are declared to be 'ethnic' problems. Similarly, there is complete silence and sometimes even support for the activities of the People's War Group in Andhra, because it is supposed to be fighting for revolution and has taken up the cause of the tribal people. Most of the civil liberty groups have revealed complete bankruptcy by keeping quiet regarding PWG's activities even when the cadre and leaders of the CPI, CPI-M and the Congress have been kidnapped, maimed, mutilated and killed in Andhra and the neighbouring areas. Those who capture booths are condemned but those who use violence to prevent people from voting are quietly ignored if not praised.

Narco-terrorism-using drug money to finance terrorist activity is also becoming a problem in India.

Mutual co-operation among terrorist movements-as in Punjab and Kashmir and in the North Eastern states is also a matter of grave concern. The March 12th, 1993 serial bombings in Bombay have added another complex mosaic to terrorism in India the growing collaboration between various terrorist movements in different parts of the world with crime syndicates operating within a country.

Inspite of the magnitude of the problem there has been no international consensus on a solution of the problem of terrorism, as it has often been perceived that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter". In India the attempts to control terrorism has been mainly through the deployment of police, military and para-military forces. At the same time efforts have been made to redress the socio-economic grievances which were the causes of terrorism. In this regard the government has met with some success in Punjab and the North East but the battle continues in Kashmir.

Ultimately it is only by improving social, economic and political conditions and by fostering the forces of democracy and secularism, peace and stability that the battle against violence, fratricidal conflict and terrorism can be won.

Transition of Terrorism in India

Terrorism in India is undergoing an acute transition, both in the operational and the ideological aspects. Terrorism in India has been acquiring a new degree of lethality characterized by meticulous planning, intelligence collection, sophisticated training, and exploiting local population for creating support networks, Most importantly, it is expanding beyond the 'cycle of anonymous' remotely detonated blasts towards exploiting sea and air channels (latest source inputs are indicative of these developments) and fiyadeen attacks (suicide assaults by well armed and trained terror cells), a trend that was till now not witnessed in India outside of Kashmir.

In this, the forces of polity, social dynamics and international support networks continue to play a major role. The transition process however has been increasingly driven by the adoption of modern technology, better communication and information networks, and the unique phenomena of the globalization of terror. As a result, the terrorists in India are improving their technological sophistication in many areas of operational planning, communications, targeting and propaganda.

The motives of the terrorists now incorporate hurting the business sentiments and the international image of India rather than terror attacks as symbolic acts of Islamic Jihad. The objective is increasingly to cause pan-India terror, one impact of which is to damage the

confidence in India's image of a stable emerging economy and business environment. The 'new breed' of terrorism in India is confident, bold in actions and increasingly sophisticated. The bellwether currents that define the new breed of terrorism are:

(a) Enhanced Operational Capabilities and Support Networks: For the first time ever, the (Islamic) terrorism has a pan-India network of operatives and logistics support. 1-his has radically evolved over the past 18-24 months and enabled the successful execution of large scale attacks in multiple cities. This is father indicative of the fact that there are several front line terror operations supported by an underlying network of communication infrastructure and covert support machines: all functioning like a single well-coordinated entity. Before the 'defining' year 2008 terror attacks mostly included only sporadic blasts in the target cities.

The frequency of major terror attacks was also comparatively moderate- four terror attacks in 2007, three in 2006, and one attack in 2005. But 2008 was different - there were at least 12 highly synchronized mass terror attacks since the beginning of the year.] lie size and scale of organizational resources needed to carry out terror attacks that happened in Indian cities between May and November 2008 indicate the requirement for at least 80 to 120 terrorist operatives not including sleeper cells and those involved in logistic support. This is a very large number.

(b) Home grown Terror: The ideological underpinning of the movement is undergoing a change as reflected by the operatives increasingly becoming indigenous and having a local urban face. Increasingly, indigenous organizations such as SIMI have been created on the lines of the Deobandi ideology of extreme fundamentalism. Moreover, the Muslim Diaspora of Indian origin has been largely influenced by the Gujarat riots and has increased the funding for extremist activities. Another domino effect is the surfacing of Indian-origin tech savvy terrorists working in prominent IT companies (indicative of the diluting definition of infrailtrators). A case in point is the arrest of Yahya Kanmnakutty, a graduate of the Regional engineering College, Calicut, and a former employee of Tata InfoTech and GF The vast illegal immigrant population of Bangladeshis (spread all across India) has emerged as a readily available target group for creating logistical support networks for terror organizations. In fact the Islamic militant organizations, to avoid unnecessary suspicion and glitches, prefer Muslim youths from all Indian states, except those from Jammu and Kashmir. For similar reasons, the Bangladeshi grants are used only for support and logistics. There is this uncomfortable development that international jihad is fording its place in the weak pockets of India's huge minority Muslim community that leaves an ambiguous evidence chain.

(c) Trams-border Linkages: One of the key definers of the present trend in terrorism is the re-routing of tenor activities to Bangladesh, shifting the focus from Pakistan. The 2001 Indian Parliament attack orchestrated certain events which forced the terror groups to rethink about

changing their base of operations. l' here is an increasing evidence of how Bangladeshi immigrants are willingly or unwillingly becoming the means of pros ding logistical support to the terror outfits across India Notably HuJI also operates from Bangladesh and its involvement of providing logistical support to the mister terror groups (from Pakistan) has been brought into light in the recent attacks.

(d) Use of Newer Forms of Explosives: Shifting away from the foreign-origin RDX to a typical home brew of explosives comprising mix of ammonium nitrate. Potassium chlorate and sulphuric acid further indicates the terrorists' enhanced operational capabilities.

(e) Excessive Nature of Attacks: India is ranked second, right behind Iraq in the number of terrorist activities (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) despite the fact that we are not a country in conflict. The dozens of bombs exploding in the same target city in a span of a few hours spells out a deadly scale of planning. Capabilities, operational confidence and sinister motives. 'The high degree of planning and existence of large all-India terror network is exuded by the very fact that the terror outfits did not feel the need to even give a day's break between the large scale serial blasts in two Indian cities (Bangalore and Ahmadabad).

(f) Destruction of India's Global Image: For the first time as seen in the November Mumbai attacks. Britons and Americans who were staying in tong city hotels were singled out and Jews were also targeted at Nariman point. All the terror targets have been cities with economic or social importance that places India in a favorable spot on the global map - Jaipur (the tourist capital of India). Bangalore (India's Silicon Valley), Ahmadabad (the third fastest growing Indian city), Surat (attempted extensive serial blasts in the diamond hub of India), Mumbai (the financial and the international face of India). The terror groups have realised that large-scale attacks in critical business hubs of India helps them realise their objectives much faster than sustaining insurgency in the border states of the country.

(g) Copy Cat Attacks: The changed pattern of attacks indicate that, like elsewhere, western interests are now a high-visibility terror target in India too and that terrorists have successfully employed new tactics such as hostage-taking and random shootings at high profile places (the Mumbai attacks). This can further trigger a wave of copycat terror incidents with a change in the tactics and targets of. While suicide bombings and vehicle-borne explosive attacks are as yet not a mode of attack, we are likely to see more fiyadeen attacks on high profile targets.

For years various measures has been put forward in response to terrorism. Some are of opinion of legal punishment, some suggested that intelligence should he modernized and more co-operation is needed among them to avoid any terrorist activity. Some security analyst blame the Government of India for engaging in a peace process with Pakistan whose military regimes has

clearly not lived up to its promises of preventing terrorist organizations from operating from its territory. These critics also find fault with the repeal of POTA, claiming the police has been demoralized. Some also sought to communalize the debate by linking the “soft on Terror” charge to “vote bank politics” some equally problematic, argument revolves around the need to solve the so called “root cause” of terrorism. PM emphasized. “Do not be provoked by rumors. Do not let anyone divide us. Our strength lies in our unity.”

UN is concerned with international terrorism. It has defined 103 types of act which come under ambit of terrorism. Further. UN has suggested 5D to tackle the problem- to disvade people from resorting to terrorism by proper education, by proper briefing to deny them resources financially. technology, protection, moral support, to deter the state who are encouraging terrorism must be deter by other state - to develop capacity to prevent occurrence defend HR’s.

Response to terrorism sought to be based on a holistic and inter-related understanding of human security, nights and developments. The domestic and international legal framework being put in place as a response to terrorism is describable. Use of force should not be the sole response as is believed in the “War on Terror”

Above all, civil society is a victim of terrorism. But nowhere any measures regarding civil society is being put forward. There is inequalities frustration unemployment in India civil society. Youth has no direction in their life. Youth is raw material for recruitment. Today, Terrorism is a giant fish which comes from depth of society and vanishes. It is a problem of world society. Role of civil society is equally important as far as national policy. There is a tendency in society to look to state for all problems. But it should be remembered that whatever role civil society can play to avoid any such type of activity couldn’t be done by any enforcement of law. Civil society has to play a role of vigilance.

Terrorism as a world phenomenon emerged in late 20th century and is going to be a major problem in the 21st century. The fact that young people in different parts of world who are assets of their county are ready to die for a cause; however illegitimate it may be shows there is something fundamentally wrong.

Under these circumstances, there is a more urgent need for the international community to help in building civil societies based on principles of democracy, good governance, human rights, and development so that they could not serve as recruiting grounds for Terrorist.

The Changing Face of Terrorism

TERRORISM is not a new phenomenon. It has been with us for aeons. Even in the very first century there was the Sicarji, a terrorist group based on religion, operating in Palestine. The

'Assassins', fed on hashish, terrorised the population in the eleventh century. But over the years the face of terrorism has changed. It has become more lethal, more widespread more difficult to control.

A CIA publication defines terrorism as the "threat or use of violence for political purposes when such action is intended to influence the attitude and behaviour of a target group other than the immediate victim and its ramifications transcend national boundaries". Contemporary terrorist groups are less organized than their fore bearers and their depredations are unorganized acts with political motivation. At the same time they are more implacable, less structured and more difficult to predict and penetrate. The unpredictability magnifies the effect of violence and makes it difficult to combat.

Example of terrorist-narcotics-smuggling link. The nexus is more covert, but certainly exists, in India. That the country is placed between two drug-producing regions-the golden triangle of Myanmar, Thailand and Laos, and the golden crescent of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran is a cause of concern to the authorities. It has been pertinently observed that the route for passage of drugs worldwide is full of violence. India, being a passage country offering a narcotics exit in Mumbai, lays itself open to the terrorist-smuggler nexus. An ideology is grafted on to give the trade a certain legitimacy. Narcotics dealers have enough funds to finance the terrorists who require ready cash to procure weapons. These weapons are also easily brought in with the help of the infrastructure set up by the drug smugglers. International banks are there to launder the drug money.

Terrorists are today adopting mafia tactics. They extort protection money from businessmen to fund their activities. Sometimes, ethnopolitical terrorist groups get succour from foreign governments which exploit the genuine or imaginary grievances of the terrorists. It is alleged that India capitalises on the fact that LTTE is a Tamil terrorist outfit and helps it covertly to keep its small neighbour Sri Lanka under control. However, hostile governments cannot create the necessary grievances or potential terrorists where they do not exist. It is unfortunate, perhaps, that the conditionspolitical and socio-economic-that encourage the growth of terrorism are now in existence in several regions. Religious revival grows out of dissatisfaction rising out of corruption and consumerism. It soon grows into a rigid mould of what is termed "fundamentalism". Political infighting and instability again provide a suitable ground for the growth of terrorist groups., Socio-economic conditions of rising unemployment, lack of opportunity to earn a living, growing awareness of inequality in distribution of wealth and well-being, exploitation at the hands of powers that be-these factors create a situation which encourages youth to join terrorist groups, and others to support them. In the Northeastern part of India, militancy is widespread on this very ground. A growing number of people of this region

believe that successive Indian governments have deliberately neglected the economy of this region with a view to denying them the economic rights which by virtue of being Indians they rightly deserve. That the cadre strength of some of the local terrorist outfits such as ULFA is growing in this hostile region due to this very fact cannot be denied. With the proliferation of such conditions, there is a spread and growth of terrorist groups in several regions of the world. It needs to be emphasized that these groups lack the ideological and moral fervour that prompted the terrorists of an earlier era. The idealism is superficial now; beneath the veneer is the lust for power. This explains the mushrooming of many terrorist groups espousing the same cause-witness Afghanistan or our own Kashmir.

Democratic states find it difficult to deal with terrorist groups. Because of freedom of movement in a democracy, more targets are exposed to terrorist attacks. The terrorists take full advantage of the rights and freedoms granted in such a system and cynically exploit them. The media, too, publicises terrorist attacks and gives the groups the publicity they desire. The terrorists of today find it smooth going with human rights groups speaking up for them and with modern means of communications and transport within their easy reach. There have been numerous instances when some of the human rights groups and activists in India are known to jealously safeguard the supposed violations of the human rights of the terrorists. But when it comes to speaking for the rights of the common citizens or the security personnel, they are seldom known to rise to the occasion.

The terrorist groups are now decentralised and can spread their tentacles anywhere and everywhere. The modern face of terrorism can be combated only by a superior intelligence network. Indeed, intelligence is the key to decide the tactics to be employed to deal with the actual threat. The law enforcing machinery has to gear up - think faster and anticipate the moves of the terrorists - if it wants to meet the challenge. But ultimately, whatever short-term tactics are employed, the conditions that give rise to terrorism should be tackled and that can be done only on a political plane.

Terrorism can never lead to democracy
Down with Oppression!
Long Live Oppression!!
The two slogans are, indeed, contradictory, and yet how often we see that yesterday’s freedom fighter is today’s dictator! The terrorist groups that operate on a worldwide stage today are imbued with this contradiction; not one of them is free of it. Whether it is the LTTE, the ULFA, the Naxalites of various hues and shades, or the so-called ‘Islamic’ fundamentalists fighting in our own Kashmir or in other parts of the world, not one of these groups can tolerate the flexibility and tolerance for a different view that is the hallmark of democracy. Yet each one ‘of

them will claim laud and clear that they fight for democracy and freedom of the oppressed. Their most inhuman arts-kidnapping, torture and murder of innocent people- are done in the name of winning 'human rights' for certain groups of people. They claim they are forced into these acts because they have no other way of calling attention to the plight of the oppressed or getting justice for them. Some of them, like the Naxalites who represent the extreme Left radicals, advocate the use of violence and bloodshed to achieve the goal of social change. The presumption is that social and economic change would follow once the established power is destroyed by force and replaced by an ideological system that will usher in a new era of classless society. Unfortunately, there is no evidence yet anywhere in the world of this classless society or complete equity in prosperity coming in the wake of revolutions, however bloody they have been. A new class structure grows, and as Orwell said in Animal Farm, there are always some pigs more equal than other animals. And the promised freedom and unrestricted flow of milk and honey remains as distant as they were before the new dispensation.

The ideology of use of violence to correct the ills of society does, however, appeal to many who are frustrated at their lot, crushed by poverty and waiting endlessly for the fruits of development to 'trickle' down. And the ideology combined with the promise of a Utopia appeals specially to the young. The voting hate to wait, they are impatient to go ahead and achieve something, and hitting out at those they see and are made to see as their oppressors comes easily to them. The promise of utopia appeals to their innate idealism, for most young people loves to dream of something great. And when their dreams of achieving something meets with obstacles in the form of corrupt officials, lack of educational/job opportunities, callous contempt from the 'elite', they are easily swayed by the firm voice of radical action to fight these ills. It is not surprising that the naxalite movement is mainly concentrated in the rural and backward areas of various states. Poor peasants, usually landless, form the rank and file of these organizations.

Any research done to find the root causes of the growth of terrorism points out that there are genuine political and socio-economic conditions which help terrorist groups to originate and flourish. The authorities are oppressive, the rule of law is subverted to favour the rich and influential or particular classes, and there is no redressal forthcoming from those whose business it is to look into the grievances of the people. The political leaders, more often than not, have lost touch with the needs of the masses, or have grown callous to their basic needs, or have developed fiefdoms of their own that work on loyalty to particular personalities and not on the democratic basis of justice for all. Corruption rules the roost in all fields, and ordinary individuals cannot get their business with government done without huge bribes. The funds allocated for development, as is well known, are shared by 'middlemen' -the officials and politicians; and the poor remain where they were if not worse off than before. In such

circumstances, a promise of radical change seems welcome. Indeed, many of the naxalite and other militants show a readiness to work for the welfare of the local communities and get things done. Quick justice is meted out, with more than a degree of fairness. The Robin Flood image cannot but appeal to the poor who have borne the brunt of violence at the hands of the rich and powerfid. The hatred one feels for the corrupt and callous makes one readily overcome one's conscience over the right and wrong of violence and bloodshed, and in any case it is only revenge for what one has been made to suffer. In the beginning, the idea of hurting those who hurt one comes as sweet revenge; later, killing the innocent is smoothed over by the ideologues as necessary for the cause-the small sacrifices essential on the way to achieving the cherished goal of well being of all.

Unfortunately, the militants are themselves no subscribers to the basic tenets of democracy. At the first sign of resentment at their high handedness or rigid implementation of their 'rules', they show their inability to tolerate any difference of opinion. They cannot abide the growth of other power centres, or another leader The 'subjects' are brought into line with a show of violence and no one is allowed to stray. Once again, it is just a power game, hiding under the guise of benevolence and concern for people's welfare

Topic: Food security for Sustainable National Development

The issue of food security, especially in a developing nation like India, raises the twin problems of uncertain food production and unequal food distribution. The impact of unequal food distribution can have adverse effects on the rural and urban population living below the poverty line. Food insecurity is not only economic problem but also problem of non-humanity approach in India. There availability of the food grains is enough to satisfy their needs. According to the statistical data published by the 'Food Corporation of India' and the government of India food grain availability is 229 million tonnes in 2008-09 which is 230 million tonnes in previous year. While it is happening because, foodgrain traders are doing speculation practice and sealing them in high prices than fair prices. We may say that, Food insecurity is not only natural but also manmade

India is second largest country in the world in the manner of population. It is most important considerable plus point of the India, because it involve large human capital. Even we all Indian are thinking that, we will become super power in the world. But when we look at the basic problems of the Indian peoples, we know that- the Indian common man is facing lots of problems today. Recently most of Indian peoples are struggling with the bread and butter due to the continuously increasing prices of foodgrain, vegetables, pulses and other cereals.

Food security happens when all people at all times have access to enough food that should affordable, safe and healthy, culturally acceptable , meets specific dietary needs, obtained in a dignified manner and produced in ways that are environmentally sound. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people’s dietary needs as well as their food preferences. But food security is a complex sustainable development issue, linked to health through malnutrition, but also to sustainable economic development, environment, and trade. There is a great deal of debate around food security. If we fail to maintain above there has been food insecurity. Food insecurity exists when all people, at all times, do not have physical and economic access to the sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

In a broad sense food security means availability of food and one’s access to it . The term food here denotes at least that amount and that variety of food that supplies the minimum clinical needs of a person i.e. food that not only helps the person remain living(used in the very narrow sense of breathing, if to breathe were to life) but also does not stunt his physical and mental growth. But why so much of talking about food security? Why not leave food security in the hands of market forces? What is so special in this issue as over a host of other issues the world is facing. Two reasons , one moral and ethical and two, the mundane issues having a direct effect on the so called growth parameters of a nation or the world at large. In the remaining essay the moral issues have been analyzed first and then the more mundane issues.

According to the data published by the government of India and the Food Corporation of India, total production of foodgrain was 230.78 million tonnes in 2007-08 and in recent year it is 229.85 million tonnes. There is just 0.93 million tonnes of foodgrain production decreased than last year. Hence question is that, only 0.93 million tonnes falling production of foodgrain can create such situations of food insecurity in India? When look at the statistics relating to the major foodgrain production. We found that, rice production is increased from 96.69 to 99.37 million tonnes in 2007-08 to 2008-09, wheat production is decreased from 78.57 to 77.63 million tonnes, production of coarse cereals is just decreased from 40.76 to 38.67 million tonnes, cereals production is decreased from 216.02 to 215.67 million tonnes and production of pulses is near about stable it is changed from 14.76 to 14.18 million tonnes in same year. In the same year population growth is near about hardly 1.10 percent and net growth of population may be 0.50 to 0.75 percent. It is not larger growth which may become burden on food supply in India. Because, in the same period fish production is increased from 6.8 to 7.3 million tonnes, fruit production

increased from 59563 thousand tonnes and production of vegetables is increased from 115011to 125887 thousand million tonnes. Apart from the production of foodgrain and supported foods buffer stock of foodgrain also increase continually since 2007. In year 2006-07 buffer stock of wheat were 54.28 million tonnes and 119.77 million tonnes of rice stock. In year 2007-08 stock of wheat were 77.12 million tonnes and 114.75 million tonnes of rice and in year 2009 stock of wheat is increased to 182.12 million tonnes and stock of rice is increased to 175.76 million tonnes. There has been net growth in the major foodgrain production in India. So we conclude that, it is not economic problem it may be another type.

Supply side analysis of the food market shows that, there is not greater change in foodgrain production in India. But recently all Indians are facing a problem of low availability of foodgrain in the market and its higher prices. It is questionable, because generally trend of rising price can be found whether production of particular goods is decreased. But unfortunately production of foodgrain is near about stable while prices are rising rapidly in India. It is happen in the retail market due to the speculative practice of the traders.

According to the supply department of the government of Indian and the government of Maharashtra most of traders are kipping illegal stock of foodgrain and pulses. They are doing such for only profit motive and ignore the morality. Hence, we can say that it is not only natural problem but also manmade. In another word we can say that “Hunger created by nature but supported by traders”.

It may be possible to make food security in India in good manner. If we doing the proper planning of foodgrain production and fair practices in food market. There is need of strong control over the food market in India. In developing countries like India, the root causes of food insecurity include, poverty, corruption, national policies that do not promote equal access to food for all, environmental degradation, barriers to trade, insufficient agricultural development, population growth, low levels of education, social and gender inequality, poor health status, cultural insensitivity, and natural disasters. If the government concentrate the problem specific it is possible by the existing majors, but there is need of implementation of that in proper manner and accurately. Public distribution system is very good way to overcome the problem of speculation by the private traders.

Another way to food security is increase in fruit, milk and fish production, Fish is not only a vital food it is also a source of livelihood for millions of people around the globe. We can solve that problem by the increase in inland and sea fish production in India. The policy of mitigating nutritional deficiencies and food security by fisheries is a pragmatic move in India, considering the fact that sea has ample scope for continuous supply of protein rich food. We need to exploit the food from sea to counter the menace of malnutrition. India, with its vast coastline and seas

can use science and technology to make full use of fisheries in ensuring food security to its vast populace.

The objectives of the Public Distribution System-PDS are good but it was failed to accomplish that objective due to the corruption. PDS is better way to tackle the problem of food speculation of private traders. If the government will succeed the in the motive of PDS the intensity of food insecurity problem will be reduced in future. However, the cruel reality is that despite this huge food production, a huge buffer stock and an extensive network of PDS, millions of people are food insecure and many even die of starvation. Food Insecurity and tragedy hit different parts of the country every year.

The present food crisis is due to lack of proper distribution and the trading system impeding free flow of food. Even increase in agricultural productivity also one of the solution for this problem. This should be based on integrating inputs and outputs-the supply of high yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation, supported by credit alongside remunerative output prices. A second “green revolution” is essential to stimulate food production in many India. . It is crucial to ensure that farm and trade policies of developed countries do not artificially reduce the prices of their food grains. This makes it virtually impossible for farmers from developing countries to compete both in their own domestic markets, due to cheap food imports, and also in the international market.

The problem of food security comes mainly from the slow growth of purchasing power of the people in the rain-fed eco-systems. Efforts must be made to help them by developing drought resistant seeds, cost-effective dry-land farming techniques. A major challenge to food security comes from dietary diversification of the poor. If cereal pricing is left to the market forces, government playing the facilitating role, land will be released from rice and wheat cultivation to meet the growing demand for non-cereal crops such as oilseeds, fruits and vegetables in accordance with diet diversification. At the movement the problem is the problem of distribution of existing comfortable level of supply. However with increasing population combined with low agricultural productivity. Therefore we should do efforts to increase productivity and re-correct the distribution problems.

The moral issues stem from the undeniable right of every human being “The right to Life”. The right has been recognized right from ancient times by enlightened monarchs (the not so enlightened ones have ignored it at their own peril) and their ministers right down till date by the United Nations and all major constitution of the world (Including our Indian constitution where it has even been given a very liberal interpretation by the courts).Undeniably right to life and right to food security goes hand in hand for without food one cannot live. It even sounds and looks

obscene that while a section of the population lives in opulence another section goes to bed hungry.

Now talking of the more mundane issues relating to food security and the challenges it poses.This can be analyzed under several heads ,some from wholly materialistic points, points which would appeal to even the self seeking of men and some which stems from the very question what or who constitutes a nation.

It is foolish in the long run, to imagine that this malnourished and exploited population will stay quiet for all time to come. Hunger maddens a man, brings out the beast in him, and removes his cloak of civilization. Sooner rather than later they will get frustrated on seeing the yawning gap between his standards and that of the rich. This invariably will lead to a revolt against the existing order. The revolt can proceed on two lines. They may just become another factor in politics (just as it is now), become a pressure group or the revolt may become destructive – destroying all signs of opulence which will be perceived as symbol of exploitation. The later scenario may not be the best suited for business and trade and factors contributing to growth and GDP as such. Factories and industries may be laid waste, members of the well to do may be killed and labour unrest may become acute. Law and order will suffer; vast areas of the country may be simply out of reach of the business men, thus inhibiting business and growth

Even the former scenario also may not be all that pleasing. A strong pressure group from the poor in a democracy may not be all that happy a circumstance for the business class. It may inhibit the government from making business friendly policies .Fear psychosis and not reason may make them do this. This would make the nation less friendly for business which in this globalised world has the potential to lead to catastrophic consequences. Added to all these woes is that of the moral degradation that people of the country may suffer. A period of unrest, if too prolonged will not reward hard work and hence bring a moral degeneration among people. Opportunistic elements may crop up who may play havocs with the future of the nation. Undoubtedly this will hamper the growth and development of the nation.

India today is placed in a unique position. Our huge population, if trained properly can be huge asset. If not a huge liability. If we immediately do not address the issue of food security immediately (along with issues of education e.t.c) we may not be able to sustain our development for long. Signs of frustration are evident in many parts of our country with many groups even taking up arms. If the situation continues abated we may soon end up in civil war .Peace then will go to the winds and with it all hope of development. What's more, a weak India may offer many powers the window to carry out their interests at our expense. So Indian industries may go at the receiving end. What is true for India is true for most nations. Food security is the minimum one has to be given. Without it, with masses starving no development by

whatever parameters can be ever sustainable and without development national development is inconceivable.

Food Security Act

2010-20 has been declared as the decade of innovation. An essential pre-requisite for achieving the position of an innovation superpower is providing an opportunity to every newborn child to achieve his innate genetic potential for physical and mental development. Every fourth child in our country is characterized by low-birth weight due to under-nutrition. Nearly 45% of children below the age of 5 in the country are under-weight. To become an innovation superpower, we must adopt a whole-life cycle approach in our plans for food for all and forever. We must not deceive ourselves into believing that by establishing 14 innovation universities, we will become an innovation superpower. Nutrition and education are the pathways to a happy country.

Food security at the level of each individual child, woman and man is the first requirement for a healthy and productive life. Jawaharlal Nehru had said in 1947, “everything else can wait, but not agriculture”. These words are more relevant today than 65 years ago, since our population has grown from 300 to 1,200 million during this period. The three major components of sustainable food security are availability of food in the market, which is a function of internal production and if necessary imports; access to food, which is a function of adequate purchasing power and absorption of food in the body, which is a function of clean drinking water, sanitation and primary healthcare. The proposed National Food Security Act is being designed to ensure economic access to food through legal entitlement, while factors relating to production and absorption are proposed to be included as essential enabling provisions. Our 80% of the over 115 million farming families belong to the small (2 ha and less) and marginal (1 ha and less) categories. There is widespread malnutrition in the families of small and marginal farmers. Therefore, increasing the productivity, profitability and stability of small farms will make the largest contribution to overcoming hunger caused by inadequate purchasing power.

Some of the essential components of a National Food Security Act should include.

A lifecycle approach, to legal entitlements, starting with pregnant mothers. A “First 1,000 days Child Nutrition and Development Programme” should be organized to provide nutritional support to pregnant women so that the new born has an opportunity to express his innate intellectual potential. An enlarged food basket that will include nutritious millets in the Public Distribution System, thereby achieving double benefits of improving nutrition security and providing a market for the crops of dry land farmers and tribal families. The National Food Security Act is our last hope in getting coordinated action initiated in achieving the goal of sustainable food security.

Topic: BPO boom in India

Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) is an important component of Business Strategy of major organizations worldwide. BPO is positively related to the quest for more efficient organizational designs: cost reduction, productivity growth and innovative capabilities. Hence, BPO is important source for strategic advantage. Many recent market research surveys have indicated the CEO's around the world across all the companies feel that BPO is key strategy for survival in today extremely competitive business environment. BPO offers many benefits. It allows the organization to concentrate on their core activities by releasing resources which have constrained in non-core activities. It helps organization cut costs by reducing HR Costs – salary bills, perks, employee benefits, administration overheads. The client only has to pay for useful quality work duly completed by BPO. It helps to reduce recruitment and training expenses. It helps Improve quality of service and productivity by bringing greater accountability and transparency in production standards. It enables an organization to get increasing volume of paperwork and routine administration work done quicker and at significantly lesser cost. BPO also offer 24 x 7 x 365 service availability which is very important in customer service related operations.
ABOUT A CENTURY AGO, GEORGE SANTAYANA noted that, "Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it." Today, that sentiment is applicable to Indian BPO aspirants. When I hear about companies—Indian and foreign—creating a near frenzy in setting up BPO operations in India and dominating the world back office processing marketplace, I only hope that they have spent time studying the history of the Indian IT Services industry.

Let's look at this history. Today, Indian IT services providers are enjoying tremendous growth in their revenue. The success of IT services providers has been based on offering skilled IT services at a much lower cost than comparable American or European companies. This business model is rooted in the history of Indian companies offering low cost data entry services. The formula for "winning" business from indigenous, well-established companies was based on creating a market by providing programming services at a much cheaper rate. Y2K helped feed this frenzy and many Indian IT services companies got into the business. It also helped that India produced well-qualified software engineers from its schools, and that there was a ready labor pool available to do low cost programming. The mantra became: "Come to India, where IT is done cheaper."

BPO or Business Process Outsourcing is an entire industry in itself wherein businesses in a certain country outsource some of their operations (usually back office) to other locations in the world to cut costs by using the cheap labor in these countries. This helps them to increase their profits as well as concentrate on their core operations. The Business Process Outsourcing

industry in India caters mostly to Western operations of multinational corporations. Annual revenues from BPOs are around $11 billion, around 1% of GDP.

Outsourcing to India began in the early 1980s when many European airlines started using Delhi as a base for back office operations. Later, American Express consolidated its JAPAC (Japan and Asia Pacific) back office operations into New Delhi. This center was headed by Raman Roy. In the 1990s, Jack Welch of GE was persuaded to consider Gurgaon as a base for back office operations. By 2002, all major Indian software organizations were into BPO, including Infosys, HCL, Satyam, TCS and Patni. The entry of international 3rd party BPO players like Convergys and SITEL also strengthened the BPO movement in India. Service arms of organizations like Accenture, IBM, Hewlett Packard and Dell also set up shop in India. The BPO industry flourished in India because it could deliver services at a low cost. But increases in infrastructure costs, real estate costs, and salaries raised BPO costs significantly. So Indian BPOs began shifting their operations from Tier-1 cities like Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai to Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities like Mysore, Trivandrum, Kochi, Chandigarh, Mohali, etc.

The transformation of rural India kicked off with the emergence of rural BPOs. The global BPO Industry is estimated to be worth 120-150 billion dollars. India enjoys 5-6% share of the total industry, and 63% share of the offshore component.

Indian IT companies achieved quality certifications (CMM, ISO etc.) in order to create a service value in addition to lower labor rates. However, my experience has been that little has changed. Lower cost is still the key value proposition presented by Indian companies. It makes one wonder: what is the value proposition? Cheaper rates; where is the service advantage? Cheaper rates. Where is the differentiation with the Western market place? Cheaper rates. The new mantra still is: “Come to India, where CMM level 5 IT service is done cheaper.” Yet given their history of moving from low priced data entry services to low price programming services, Indian companies apparently have not learned the lessons of the past. What do you find when you look at the offerings from these companies? Most of them are touting “low level” transaction processing services at a cheaper cost. For example, they offer a staffed call center (glamorized as Customer Relations Management (CRM) services), or an accounts payable/receivable operation madeimportant as Cash Management services.

A bankcard application data entry and processing center is called a “Credit Management services center” and keypunching services are disguised under a new name-medical transcription services. In the name of BPO, these companies are creating a business niche where rates will become the battleground, cheaper services will be the value proposition and competition will be among each other. To me, the mantra has become: “Come to India where transaction processing services are done cheaper.” Some controversies have erupted around the industry. BPO

employees are scornfully described as cyber coolies. Also, the rape and murder of a few female employees by car drivers raised safety issues. Despite all this, there is no doubt that the BPO industry has raised the standard of life for many young Indians thereby swelling the ranks of the Indian middle class and creating an economic boom. However the recent global economic downturn has impacted the industry negatively as new contracts from the US and other client nations might dry up in the wake of demands that jobs in these countries should remain within their borders.

Topic: The Role Of United Nations In Peacekeeping

Today the UN is on the verge of becoming the institution that its founders foresaw for it in 1945. It has been able to put more than 50,000 peace-keepers in 13 peacekeeping and observer missions ranging from Somalia and Cambodia to the former Yugoslavia. Eight of these 13 missions have been launched since 1989. And a many bitch missions are being organized. Of these missions, four have been in the Middle East-Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Kuwait. In Africa there are forces in Western Sahara, Angola, Somalia and Mozambique. In Asia, there are peacekeepers between India and Pakistan and in Cambodia. The UN is in El Salvador in Latin America and in Europe in Cyprus and the former Yugoslavia. Peace-keeping as a concept is not specifically described in the UN Charter, but it has evolved over the years as an internationally acceptable way of controlling conflicts. Since the advent of UN peace-keeping, for the first time military forces have been used not to wage war, establish domination, serve the interests of any power or group of powers but rather to control and resolve conflicts between states or communities within states.

To date, there have been 20 peace-keeping operations. Of these 10 were peacekeeping forces and the other 10 were military observer missions. This ‘distinction is’not, however, absolute. Unarmed military observers are often attached to peace-keeping forces, and specialist military units, sometimes armed forces can be attached to observer missions. Several past operations have included major civilian elements, the UNTAG operation in Namibia is an example. Future operations may require other combinations of personnel performing an increasing variety of functions. The latest peace-keeping operations to be established were the 300 member “UN, Iraq. Kuwait observation mission (UNIKOM) to monitor a demilitarised zone between Iraq and Kuwait after the Gulf war of 1991. The peace-keeping force in Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) to keep the peace in the civil war-torn country since February 1992 and the UN peace force in Cambodia (UNTAC) which became operational from April 1992. Some of these operations relate to disputes between states but the most recent relate to civil wars. The list of course does not include several areas of disastrous conflicts where the UN is not vet involved in

peacekeeping. Along the southern flank of what used to be the Soviet Unionin Georgia, Azerbaijan and in Tajikistan, fighting of a savage intensity rages. The UN has sent fact-finding mission: and there are calls for the international community to be involved.

The main responsibility for peace-keeping lies with the Security Council. The UN charter states that when the Council determines the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, it shall decide what the UN should do to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council links first for peaceful settlement of the dispute. If its recommendations are not followed by the parties involved, it can call for action by the international community, which might include asking member-state-to make armed forces available to enforce its wishes.

Since the UN was founded, there have been only two military enforcement actions-in 1950 and 1990 when the Security Council, in a series of resolutions recommended member-states to collectively deter aggression by use of force against an identified aggressor. These two operations differed from peace-keeping operations, which are based on the consent of the parties, are not pennitted to use force except in self-defence, and are under the command of the SecretaryGeneral.

In order for the 15-member Security Council to adopt a proposal for peacekeeping operation, there should not be any negative vote from any of its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States). The Secretary-General reports to the Council on how the operation can be launched and executed. Subject to the Council's approval, he must then make the required arrangements-choosing to supply military or other civilian personnel, supplies and equipment, transportation and logistic support to the UN.

In approving the Secretary-General's report on the establishment of a peacekeeping operation, the Council also decides how it will be funded on a voluntary basis or, as is usually the case, on an obligatory basis as expenses of the world organisation in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. In the latter case, the General Assembly decides how the expenses will be apportioned among the member-states.

United Nations' soldiers work under the UN commander, who takes his orders from the Secretary-General (who is himself responsible to the Security Council). but they remain tinder national command in matters of pay.. discipline and promotion. Only in exceptional circumstances may UN troops use force. They carry light arms and may employ them only if they are attacked, or if they are stopped by force from carrying out their mandate.

The increasing importance of the UN as a peacekeeper can be seen font the tact that. as against the thirteen UN peacekeeping operations launched during the first forty-three years of the organization's existence five were mounted in 198889 and four were initiated during 1990-91. But their recent missions in Yugoslavia, Cambodia and Somalia have posed some problems. The United Nations became actively involved in the situation in Yugoslavia in September 25, 1991, when the Security Council, meeting at the ministerial level, unanimously adopted its Resolution 713(1991) expressing deep concern at the fighting in that country and called on all states to implement immediately a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia.

By its resolution. the Council invited the secretary-General to offer his assistance.. in cooperation with the Government of Yugoslavia and all those promoting peace efforts. On October 8, 1991, the Secretary-General appointed Cyrus Vance. former United States Secretary of State, as his Personal Envoy to Yugoslavia. Since then- the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy have maintained constant contact with all the parties in the Yugoslav conflict.

On February 21. the Security Council, by its Resolution 743 (1992). established UNPROFOR for an initial period of 12 months. The Council confirmed that the Force should be an interim arrangement to create the conditions of peace and security required for the negotiation of an overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis. UNPROFOR was deployed in the three United Nations Protected Areas (UNPA) in Croatia-eastern Slovenia. Western Slovenia and Krajina-which. for United Nations purposes has been divided into tour sectors: east, north. South and west.

UNPROFOR includes military, police and civilian components comprising a total of some 14.000 personnels. The military components consists of 12 enlarged infantry battalions (same 10,000 all ranks), headquarters, logistics and other support elements totalling about 2,840 all ranks, and 100 military observers. Its tasks include verifying demilitarization of the UNPAs. controlling access to them by establishing checkpoints. patrolling them. investigating wry com-plaints, and_ if serious tensions, should develop between nationalities in a UNPA, interposing itself between the two sides in order to prevent hostilities.

In most of its past peace-keeping operations,' the United Nations had refused to send troops into an area until a cease-fire was assured and all sides agreed to the UN presence. In the Yugoslav case, the cease-fire has proved fragile: the ethnic conflict has been far more complex than in many other civil wars elsewhere in the world.

In the past. the UN had accepted the principle that it would withdraw, from a peacekeeping operation if any of the parties to the dispute asked it to leave. But in this case the United Nations

intends to operate under a different principle: it will remain until the Security Council decides it is time to go.

Since then the UN moved its operations to Bosnia Herzegovina, where civil war had raged. While UN troops battle to feed the starving populace, the Bosnian Muslims continue to reel under atrocities committed by the Serbs. The UN is handicapped by the nature of its mandate. The UNPROFOR is a peacekeeping force but unfortunately in Bosnia. today, there is no peace to keep. The resources of the UN are also severely strained as donor countries reeling under global recession are steadily cutting down their aid to the UN and are defaulting on their commitments.

In Cambodia. the United Nations Transition Authority, on Feb 28. 1992 has successful[,, overseen the elections inspire of threats by the dreaded Khmer Rouge. UNTAC was a delicate and difficult mission for it aimed to put ,in end to two decades of war, destruction and suffering, to create the conditions for a lasting peace and to lead the Cambodian people to free and democratic elections.

The operation covered seven major areas: promotion of human rights, free and fair elections, military arrangements, civil administration, maintenance of law and order, repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons, and rehabilitation of the infrastructure during the transitional period.

The UN had invested more than two-billion dollars and 22.000 personnel in Cambodia. It is felt that some form of UN involvement will be essential till the country gets backs on its feet but a sustained involvement will be impossible as not one country in the developed world will be willing to bankroll the costly exercise.

The UN involvement in Somalia began primarily to undertake relief operations and bring food to the starving populace who were caught in the midst of a civil war. But attacks on the UN convoy led to the UN recommendation of military force. The UN sent the largest peacekeeping force in UN history to provide humanitarian assistance and establish peace. Comprising 28,000 troops and 2800 civilians it helped to rehabilitate Somalia’s economy, re-establish Somali police. clear landmines and help in repatriating refugees. The mandate teas valid till 31st Oct. 1993.

Experience of the United Nations’ peace-keeping operations discussed here suggests certain problems and limitations. Peace-keeping operations make up part of what Flanmlarskjold called “preventive diplomacy” keeping involved intervention by the United Nations in conflicts that were marginal to the cold war. The explicit aim was to keep them outside of the East-West power conflict.

Clearly if the United Nations is to employ military actions, the force acting on its behalf must be strong enough to accomplish its stated purpose. Anything less will mean a fatal loss of prestige

and the end of any effective UN role. Furthermore, a force employed for its military capacity must be authorised to do more than shoot in self-defence. Such a force requires a leader—presumably the Secretary General-who can persuade either the Security Council or the General Assembly to adopt the required resolution to guide policy. Alternatively, the Secretary-General must be prepared to interpret existing resolution in a feasible manner and face the consequences.\

The financial feasibility of such forces remains another critical problem. A special committee on peace-keeping operations established during the financial crisis of 1964-65 has laboured for more than 20 years without resolving the thorny issue of finance and control. The main donor nations are behind by over $I billion in their payments to peacekeeping activities and the US itself is reported to owe something in the region of $300 million.

The United Nation Charter empowers the Security Council "to maintain or restore international peace and security," and to enforce the will of the Council on a State that has broken peace. Should the need arise, the countries would be protected from aggression by forces provided to the Security Council by member states, serving as a United Nation army at the Council's will.

Military force has quite frequently been used by the United Nations for peace-keeping. This improvisation was first devised in haste to facilitate at the end of 1956 hostilities in the Middle East. Since then, the United Nation use of military power has become a well- established practice. The use of military force by the United Nation for both enforcement and peacekeeping is essential to a world order in which international security which is looked after by the Security Council is heavily dependent on the defaulting member Stares.

The United Nations peacekeeping forces originated in 1948 when the United Nation Security signed a truce between Israel and the Arab states. Since then, the UN peacekeeping forces have been involved in scores of operations around the world, helping to maintain or re-establish peace in areas char have been the scene of armed conflict.

The peacekeeping forces consisted of two groups:

(i) Unarmed observers, who are employed to gather information and monitor activities, and
(ii) Lightly armed military forces, who are employed co separate hostile parries and maintain security.

Most of the conflicts in which the United Nation peacekeeping forces have intervened are the direct result of the fall of the British Empire. From the mid-nineteenth century until the early 20th century, Great Britain had been the world's greatest military and political power. So in 1922, Palestine was placed under British control by the League of United Nation. But Britain found it hard to settle the conflicts between Arabs and Jews.

In 1947, the United Nation successor to the League of United Nation proposed a partition plan by which Palestine would be divided into an Arab State and a Jewish State. Despite protests from the Palestinian Arabs, this plan was implemented on May 14, 1948, when Great Britain withdrew from Palestine. Israel, the Jewish state declared its independence and was attacked by five Arab states: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Transjordan (now Jordan), and Egypt.

After several weeks of fighting, the United Nation was able to persuade the disputing countries to declare a truce. In order to make sure that the truce will hold, the United Nation Security Council sent a group of observers to the area. The observers consisted of a few soldiers and the members of the United Nation secretariat. By 1949, this adhoc group of observers had evolved into an official body locally called the United Nation.

But in the changing world order the UN has to take an active role in places where the conflicts are still raging as in Bosnia or as in Somalia. Very often the UN personnels have come under direct attacks by warring factions. The massacre of twenty-two Pakistani UN soldiers by the Somali warlord was the bloodiest attack on UN peacekeepers since 1961 when 44 persons were killed in Congo. In retaliation the Pakistani UN soldiers later fired at a group of protestors killing 20. This has put the UN operations under a cloud. The UN Security Council resolution 813 passed after the massacre of the Pakistanis demands punishment for those responsible and also approved a Pakistani resolution calling for contribution of armoured personnel carriers and helicopters to prevent similar attacks passing a resolution is one thing, implementation is another. None of the developed countries like America. Britain and France are ready to shoulder extra responsibility while countries like India and Canada which used to provide troops may no longer do so because of defence cuts and lack of trained units. IIIequipped and inadequate forces action upon a feeble mandate will only bring the UN disrepute.

True Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) remained active, with observers stationed in Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. While Israel and its Arab neighbors were quarrelling over the future of Palestine, Pakistan attacked India to recover Jammu ‘and Kashmir which had ceded to India in 1948. After the ceasefire arranged by UN, in 1949, the “United Nation Security Council sent a United Nation Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to monitor the cease fire.

The new force called the First United Nations Emergency Force (UNEFI) supervised the withdrawal of foreign troops from Egyptian territory. The force also served as a buffer along the Egyptian-Israeli border and in the Gaza strip: In 1967, after the Six Day war, which pitted Egypt, Syria and Jordan against Israel, a United Nation peacekeeping force (UNEF II) was assigned to monitor the truce agreement between the countries.

In 1974, after an attack on Israel by Egypt, Jordan and Syria, another peacekeeping force (UNDOF) was installed in the Golan Heights, on the Western border of Syria, to maintain a buffer between Israeli and Syrian forces. In the 1970s, the Palestine liberation Organization (PLO) a coalition of Palestinian groups whose goal is to liberate their homeland from what they view as an illegitimate Israeli occupation- began a series of terrorist acts against Israel.

In 1978, Israel retaliated against a PLO raid by invading Lebanon, which was then a strong PLO stronghold. Following this invasion, the United Nation established the United Nation Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIl), an unusually large peacekeeping force whose duties included monitoring Israeli troop withdrawal, maintaining peace among Lebanon's warring ethnic factions, and helping the Lebanese government to re-establish its authority.

In 1988, at the conclusion of an eight year war between Iran and Iraq, the United Nation installed a peacekeeping force (UNIMOG) along border, between the two countries to observe the withdrawal of troops and to monitor any violation of the cease-fire agreement, In the same year a peacekeeping mission was sent to monitor the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the return of refugees who had fled to Pakistan.

Shortly thereafter, the United Nation peacekeeping forces received the 1988 Nobel Prize for Peace. Today's UN peacekeeping forces made up of military personnel from 58 countries are made available by the Security Council on request. They are most often dispatched to where a cease-fire has been established, but a formal peace treaty has not yet been drawn. They are also placed in a buffer zone between the disputing parries so that if hostilities resume, the combatants will confront the United Nation troops first. United Nation soldiers wear the military uniforms of their own nations but they also wear helmets or distinctive blue 'caps that identify them as members of the peacekeeping force. They carry light defensive weapons which they use only when necessary for self protection.

Members of the observing group carry no weapons at all. Since winning the Nobel Prize in 1988, the United Nation Peacekeeping soldiers have been involved in several new operations. In December, 1988, a force was sent to Angola (UNAVEM) to monitor the departure of occupying Cuban troops. In April 1989, another force was sent to Namibia to help the former South African colony make the transition to independence. In September 1989, a force (ONUCA) was sent to Central America to patrol the border around Nicaragua, whose government, under the control of Sandinista government, the United Nation force hoped to prevent further fighting in both countries. In April 1991, after a coalition of international forces led by the United States compelled Iraq to withdraw from its violent annexation of Kuwait, a United Nation peacekeeping force (UNICOM) was sent to the area co supervise troop withdrawal, monitor Iraq's adherence to (he ceasefire agreement and serve as a buffer along the Iraq-Kuwait border. United

Nation peacekeeping forces had also been sent to Cambodia, Yugoslavia, EI Salvador and Somalia.

In conclusion, it can be said that though the efforts of UN forces have not yielded effective results in all cases, it cannot be denied that most of them did a creditable job. The success of UN peacekeeping efforts depends on the consent of the host states, cooperation of the great powers and the suppliers of forces, whether military, police or civilian. Withdrawal of consent for the host state can lead either to the termination of the operations or to a period of severe disturbances, Similarly, without the cooperation of the big powers UN peace-keepings measures are bound to fail, Finally. Unless the states contributing forces and finance; come forward with necessary forces and finances, UN peace-keeping cannot succeed.

Topic: Restructuring of Indian education system

WHEN India became a republic, unlike the Railways, posts and telegraphs and the three services, our Constitution makers placed education on the concurrent list. With fourteen officially recognised languages at the outset, the framework of the future of education was tacitly laid out so that while the Centre could adopt a pattern of education for all-India needs, the states were free to evolve their own systems of education to suit local conditions. The amended Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill 2008 has been cleared by both Houses of Parliament and the President too has signed it to be an Act. It is not clear as to how the central government will co-opt the state governments into implementing the Bill on a subject, which is on the concurrent list. In India, a large number of children have to work in homes, factories and shops to fill their stomach. Under the Act, all of them will be debarred from undertaking any form of employment. The number of affected children will run in crores and the new measure may lead to chaos when implemented.

Human capabilities, unfortunately, begin to decay beyond a certain age. Good institutions, on the other hand, can - like vintage wine - get better with age. Sadly, most institutions in India tend to mimic human mortality rather than the growing goodness of ageing wine. Amongst the exceptions is the Indian Institute of Science, the centenary celebrations of which were recently kicked-off by the prime minister. As noteworthy as the achievements of this venerable institution is the fact that it has sustained (and, in fact, taken further) its success over a period of ten decades, unlike some of our older and once-great universities.

Meanwhile, the changing economic scenario has resulted in education - particularly at university level - having a positive and high “return on investment” at both individual and societal levels. At the same time, the substantial (though yet inadequate) expansion at the school level has led to a huge increase in the number of potential entrants to universities. These factors, along with the

traditional desire for education, have led to vastly increased demand for higher education. Despite big increases in the education budget (the Eleventh Five-Year Plan has been called an Education Plan), government just does not have resources to fund expansion of the system rapidly enough to meet the growing demand, given other competing resource requirements. Even within the education sector, priority will be given - quite rightly - to primary and secondary education. Dependence on government funds will, therefore, exacerbate the quantitative mismatch between supply and demand for higher education.

In the case of professional education, the supply gap is being met, to a large extent, by private institutions, mostly of poor quality, since the supply-demand mismatch means that there is little systemic pressure to improve quality. In non-professional courses, inadequate resources have affected quality. The system is also non-responsive to market needs, resulting in a curriculum that is of low relevance to employment needs. Yet, even while commercialization and privatization of education has proceeded apace, corporatization has been banned, stifling investments in formal university education.

An overly centralized and highly regulated system has not only damped initiative, but created a "lowest common denominator" type of education, which is delivering neither access (in terms of numbers) nor quality or excellence. It has also given rise to rampant corruption, especially in technical education.

Centralization and bureaucratic standardization, combined with inadequate resources, have led to low salaries with no flexibility to pay more or really differentiate between performers and non-performers. In an increasingly materialistic society, low salaries have also meant a lower social status for teachers. As a result, teaching - particularly in professional areas - attracts mainly those who do not get other jobs. Non-professional courses are seen - both by parents and students - as a "pass-time" activity, with the goal being to only get a degree. The course itself is neither relevant to their lives, nor does it help in getting employment. Little wonder that where a degree can be bought, many do so, since the degree certifies little and is necessary only to cross the first hurdle of screening for jobs.

Essential Restructuring in Indian Education System

The world is talking about the universal communicator so is India. But even though in and around we have to answer the question, Still why India is a developing country? We can found a lot of reasons for this, and one major factor is our educational practice. All the nations of the world are in the race track so as to get the supreme position and power over others.

In this race India is hindered by the dumping of illiterate citizen. The statistics shows about 59 million children under the age limit 6-14 are out of school and about 41 million people are registered in the different employment exchange across the country. The unemployment is not because of there isn't sufficient opportunity for the job seekers but the educational system made them inapt for employment. This is an ever crucial scenario for the Indian society.

Indian Education

Hence it is imperative to guarantee the qualitative education system across the nation, which is not only permissible to the higher income group, but also to the lower divisions of the population. To make this happen Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya residential schools are came across the 517 rural areas of the nation. Unlike other system in the country, the core advantage of this unban model institution is it promote the real education, rather than focusing on conventional practice, by having a common syllabus and curriculum which has the same standard as any metropolitan practice. After all for employment and for the life skill the learning happen from each institution and everyday experience rather than what we gain from the paper degree. Therefore there is an urgent need of reconstructing the overall education system is come forward. The committees under the Union Ministry of Human Resource Department focusing on the curriculum which emphasis more on the development of skills like conflict resolution and problem solving than the base learning and memorizing part. India should come under the umbrella of common curriculum and subjects for the same class which is transparent to any group or division of the society like the children from the richest family and the children from the lower income group are opened to the same subjects, without any hindrance.

But similar to all other projects which will always have long life in the discussion phase, the proposals of the respective committee cause several type of debate among the experts and devotional educationist in the country. The opinions of the people differ widely and here is the some common accepted counsels.

Ease-up and De-regulate the Education System

The aim of this type of programs is to promote the upcoming schools, collages and other institutions of higher education and to seek new investment in this field. This is also indented to eliminate the capacity shortage in the education sector in its supply side, which still focuses on the conventional practice. Privatization of the sector will increase the competition and this will bring more and more people in the path of literacy.

De-License Higher Education

The available data throw light on the fact that only 6% of the country's 18-23age group is exposed to higher education due to the limited capacity supply. The De-Licensing in the higher/professional education sector will answer this problem. These enable the institutional independence and centralize the syllabus structure. The Government should encourage the private initiatives and give freedom to take decision on the admission and fee structure. Similar the case of self-financing institution in India, the de-licensing should happen there also.

Central and State Governments Should Revolutionize Their Roles

It has now become mandatory that the Central and state Government should reframe there role in the education sector. In the present scenario the Government controlling all most all decision on this sector, starting from the academic curriculum to the working hour, this ultimately create a compulsion to follow the rule rather than focusing on education. Now the role should be revised as a facilitator and a supervisory body, so as the institution should give the power to test what is good for each organization. Here is the need of a new National Education Policy (NEP), that promote the idea of designing the curriculum from nursery to class 8th in a free-fall model and giving the power to the school examination board to design the syllabus to examine the skills of student in the areas like research, analysis, comprehension, expression and memory, rather than mere testing of memory and base learning.

Teacher Training, Infrastructure and Syllabus Instantly Requires Upgrading

The IT magnet Mr. Azim Premji said "Bring in contemporary understanding of how children learn and help teachers experience this understanding". He was among those 100 million children who were under-served by the poor quality of the teachers across the country, but make the difference by bring his competency by himself. This is one of the worst facts of the Indian education system that our teachers are not up to the benchmark of the international standard.Since the quality of the service by the teachers is poor no wonder in the statement, Indian graduates and school pass out are not good in employment. So the importance of teacher training and investment in the infrastructure same as that of syllabus and curriculum need urgent attention. Even if we have a sound syllabus, curriculum and also the facilities, if the service delivery is meager the whole effort is of no use. But we have an advantage that many private investors are there to capitalize in the sector like Azim Premji Foundation and Wipro put about Rs.5crore in the teacher training programmes annually.

Central and State Governments should Work Together to Formulate a Common School System

The inequality line in the Indian education system is clear in the schooling practices of the poor children and those of middle class and upper class together. The children belonging to the higher income group enjoys the well standardized syllabus under the Central Government named CISCE and CBSE, generally termed as the high-end English Medium schools. But those of lower income class are forced to serve by the state syllabus, called the Government schools, were not only the curriculum is poor but also the facilities and the learning environment is pitiable.

Studies shows that the state owned schools are characterized by the poor management, high teacher absenteeism, unavailability of text books, and not able to satisfy the basic requirement of drinking water and toiletries. But even though, around 90% of the schools in India are identified in the Government schools.

Hence the central and state government should acts like one and enrolls the education system under a common umbrella. Both Government should facilitate and supervise the system and welcome the new changes. Governments take the initiative in capitalizing on the infrastructure and built-up a special committee to enhance the policies and the budget should address this need of strengthening and expansion.

Compulsory English Medium of Instruction in Indian Education

Due to Globalization English become the global language and medium of communication in almost every sector. Hence for any job and the mobility in the career it is required to have a good fluency in the language. But almost every state Government owned schools strictly follows the mother tongue as the medium and gave lesser importance to the global language. But this is not the case of the central Government owned system, so the difference in the standard of the students in the class division is huge. Therefore to ensure the quality education atleast the medium of the education sector should change from the mother tongue to English. This will inturn boost up our future employee marketplace and will create a minimum uniqueness across the sector.

Critical Need to Update Syllabuses and Curriculums in Tertiary Education

One of the major priorities need to take care in this sector is the modernization of the syllabus in the higher education programs, especially in the Government-run colleges of arts, science and commerce. It have been a long time ago the last commission is made in the syllabus. The syllabus teaches the same for the last 50 years but the world around is researching on the minute part of the nanotechnology. That is a reason why the student opting for higher studies preferring institutions from US and Britain and eventually finds their career in the foreign countries itself.

The growth of hi-tech technology and the IT booming need the professionals having the good amount of exposure in the respective field. But our syllabus is still talking about the electrodes and the basic circuits. It never moves forward to EIT, FinFET Tec. etc. Hence there is a call for the latest information communication technologies into the education system occurred. The knowledge and exposure to this kind of technology will provide a base for finding opportunities to utilize them in the employee marketplace and also invest in the national development. For this reason this kind of learning should happen in the school and college level.

The above are some of the points need urgent investigation and action plan for the future and development of the nation. All we know, development should happens from the lower level, education sector is the primary stage need the overall revision. Understanding the fact that the changes never happen at a while, we can move toward the common goal of developed country, in a step by step approach.

The infrastructure necessary for implementing the Bill is still non-existent. Cost sharing on 50:50 basis with states will no doubt reduce the financial burden of states, but earmarking 25 per cent seats in all schools, which are already educating much larger number of students than their designed capacity, will result in overcrowding of these schools. Some schools are already working in two shifts at their full capacity. Without additional teachers and buildings, these schools will add to the chaos. The new amendment will no doubt make middle-class education compulsory for all children in 6-14 age group, but this may not suit our country where many children are still without a roof. If any system is to succeed, basic needs of survival must be ensured. Therefore, the children should be made to learn skills which could go on concurrently with literacy programmes.

The Kothari Commission (1964-1966) too had visualised inculcation of ethics, values, morals and character through education in our children, but the same has remained illusive. Rampant corruption and murder of values is the order of the day. So, if we wish to make education more meaningful, the education system should take care of development of skills and building up character qualities in our children.

On the one hand, the HRD Ministry wishes to de-stress education with a view to make teaching-learning a pleasure and childhood enjoyable by scrapping Class X Board examination; on the other, it is also considering the institution of a new board to conduct an all-India examination for admission to higher institutions of learning. Obviously, the measure, if taken, will postpone stress and not remove it.

Thus, the scrapping of Class X Board examination may prove to be a retrograde step as no other suitable system of evaluation has been found so far. The creation of a new all-India Board at the

10+2 level may give rise to a conflict between the Centre and the states as the CBSE and ICSE can adapt themselves to the new system, the state boards which cover almost 90 per cent schools with majority rural population will find it extremely difficult to adopt the new system. Since regional languages are now encouraged as medium of attempting IAS/IPS and allied services examinations, the liberty of holding board exams by state boards in regional languages should not be interfered with.

Assessment and accreditation of schools and colleges should be resorted to with a view to improve quality of education as envisaged by the National Policy on Education 1986. College education should get a fillip, which presently is neither related to practical life nor benefited from universities. College education can improve tremendously if university teachers give them the exposure of university education. Thus, college education should be made relevant to the national needs, which it lacks presently. Our universities too need serious reforms. Over the years, they have lost their luster of autonomy, and have been reduced to the status of running education departments and examining bodies. This can be attributed to many reasons: political, governmental and bureaucratic interference, mushrooming of research institutions, which are out of the ambit of universities, emergence of institutions like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, councils of medical, dental pharmacy, nursing and law, etc., which impinge directly on the basic functions of universities.

The system of awarding UGC grants to universities also requires a review. The HRD Ministry should create an organisation to restore the autonomy of universities. Universities themselves should undergo an assessment and accreditation process and only those universities/deemed universities, which could be resuscitated to attain desired standards, should be allowed to survive. Education reforms are long awaited and the need to revamp and rejuvenate the education system is a national necessity. These above-mentioned suggestions should be implemented with prudence and care lest we mess up our education system.

Topic: Restructuring of the U.N.O. to reflect present realities.

UNO-the predecessor of the League Nations was a product of World War II and was conceived by the Allied European power on 24th October, 1945 to make the world a safer and better place. In other, words, it will act as a con science-keeper of the International community. The four freedoms-Freedom of speech and expression, Freedom of ever, person to worship God in his own way, Freedom from want and Freedom from fear as declared by Roosevelt formed the bases on which the United Nations was built. The UN remained for its first 25 years at the centre of the international stage. Each time a new crisis arose it was to the UN that the world turned to play a

leading role in finding a solution. By the 1960s and later in the 1970s most states no longer looked to the United Nations for effective action.

The superpowers preferred to deal with each other directly outside the ambit of the UN on all important bilateral issues. Therefore the UN role in maintaining world peace came to be increasingly marginalized. However, since the late 1980s, the UN has to occupy the centre stage once again following sudden unexpected changes in the world scene: the greatly improved relations between the superpowers and their joint interest in making the UN work in solving regional conflicts and the gradual disintegration of the socialistic block and withering away of East-West tension. By the last decade of this century, it is the US which dominates the UN once again. Much of the disillusionment that is often expressed about the failure of the organization is due to the high expectation placed on its fragile shoulders. However, three of its characteristics have a global significance.

First, the revolutionary developments in Eastern and Central Europe have given powerful expression to two of the cardinal principles of the charter of the United Nations:First, the revolutionary developments in Eastern and Central Europe have given powerful expression to two of the cardinal principles of the charter of the United Nations: self-determination of peoples and respect for human rights. Second, it has been strikingly demonstrated that a status -quo based primarily on the military factor is bound to prove unstable. Third, the wider and saner concept of security, encompassing all its dimensions, which has begun to emerge, is precisely the one the United Nations has been expounding all these years.

Role of UNO: A Critical Appraisal

The UN played an active role in promoting apartheid from South Africa and India’s role in this respect is commendable. Through its trusteeship and non-self-governing provisions, the United Nations has provided the basic machinery needed for the most important as well as the biggest revolutions of our time decolonization. Through its principles of trusteeship, it has been able to maintain the international accountability needed for the transformation of the colonial states into independent ones. The United Nations has given international protection and material assistance to millions of refugees and has aided children and other target groups to meet their special needs. Although the wide gap between rich and poor has not been bridged but it has made a significant contribution to the growth of the idea that development is an international responsibility It is however in the field of functional co-operation that the United Nations record has been most impressive. The work of UN agencies in such areas as international payments. The UN role in promoting human rights has been limited largely to rule making. Violations of UN standards in

this regard have been innumerable. Nevertheless, through discussions, declaration reports and international covenants sponsored by the UN, the organization seems to have promoted the cause of human rights as never before in the past. On the question of handling of international disputes, in several cases definite and permanent settlements were reached. For example, the former Soviet Union withdrew its troops from Iran in 1946 and later again from Afghanistan in 1988. The Indonesian crisis was ultimately resolved with the establishment of an independent state of Indonesia in 1950 and similarly the Namibian dispute was finally resolved in the establishment of an independent Namibian state in 1990. In several cases it has; in effect defaulted for example Korea in 1950 and the Gulf War in 1991.

On the issue of Disarmament it has played a threefold role in different negotiations.

1. It has taken the initiative in starting negotiations and has been mainly responsible for keeping them going.
2. It has established procedures of consultation through which the concerned states have been brought together to exchange and discuss proposals.
3. It has made disarmament the concern of all states, enabling the smaller and less powerful states to become so well informed about the problems that it has been able to exert an increasing influence on the actual working of negotiations.

Although the UN charter does not mention disarmament in its basic purposes and principles, disarmament and arms control negotiations hosted by the United Nations have been carried on since its inception. Recently held comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996 and approval of all the nations of the world except India, Belgium and Libya are advancing the effort of the UN towards disarmament. To promote disarmament in this renewed trend, today remains the greatest challenge for the UN Peace-keeping has been one of the most significant innovations under the UN command, to help contain and resolve conflict between hostile state, and sometimes between antagonistic forces within a single state. It is a technique pioneered by the UN-the soldier as a catalyst for peace rather than as a instrument of power. Around the world, respect for the UN's peace-keeping activities is growing.

In 1988 and 1989 alone there were five new operations. There is a growing demand for peace-keeping forces to perform an increasing variety of functions which will require new combinations of defense, police and civilian personnel peace-keeping operations make up part of what called "preventive diplomacy" keeping involved intervention by the United Nations, in conflicts that were marginal to the cold-war. For preventive diploma- to succeed, the two most powerful UN members, the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States, had to agree or at least

keep hands off UN military actions. Recent experiences suggest that UN peace-keeping operations should be undertaken only when they are absolutely necessary.

Plagued by paucity of funds, with no military muscle of its own and constitutionally disabled from taking firm political decisions, the UN has been reduced to being a toothless tiger. Successive efforts by the UN to take action to meet the crisis in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia were brought to nougat. It was only in Iraq that the so-called UN initiative bore some fruit. There have been disquieting developments on the peacekeeping front too. Since 1990 large portions of more than 50,000 forces engaged in peacekeeping operations have not only been contributed by the big powers, especially the USA, but they have also heavily armed and as the Somalian experience suggests, been engaged in all-out combat.

\From the Bosnian case onwards, the US seems to be adopting a course of action independent of the UN through NATO. Recently West Asian crisis was resolved through intervention of US. Moreover, the UN has exercised very little control over the field commanders in such operations. The USA has all along refused to put her forces under UN control. The delays by members of the UN to pay their dues and the absence of any coherent policy have led to a lot of uncertainty regarding the feature of these operations. The UN civil services were largely dominated by the whites and they had set up the UN salary scales in their own images which the average member countries could ill-afford. The permanent members of the Security Council armed with veto can nullify any action against them but also of the other recalcitrant states against whom it has not been possible to impose decisions. UN is also under threat from regional blocks European Union, ASEAN. The idea of world government cannot be ruled out. Such a government can have all that the UN lacks today political powers, military muscle and economic strength and could be the most effective and meaningful successor to the UN.

The New International Economic Order as envisaged by the UN way hack m \<)74 is nowhere in sight and the gap between the rich and poor countries are steadily accelerating. However, the ten-point declaration of the first ever UN sponsored World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen on 6 March 1995 contains nothing to tackle the developing countries problems of poverty, unemployment and debt.

Revamping UNO: With the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the ending of cold war, the UN made valiant efforts to unravel regional and global conflicts and to lead the international community towards constructive co-operation in meeting the social and economic needs of humanity at large.

Notwithstanding those welcome developments an unprecedented crisis on the question of structural changes and reform has engulfed the UN since the mid-eighties. No, doubt every

institution has to change to cope with an ever-changing environment and new challenges and opportunities.

The UN is no exception to this general pattern of institutional adaptation. At the present juncture, change and adaptation have become imperative for the UN because of the sweeping dimensions of the recent changes in the world and the rapidity with which they have followed each other.

Recommendations of the Working Group (1994)

1. About the reform in the UN Security Council, it has recommended a small increase in the number of members of Security Council. Many members of this working group have supported an increase of two in the number of permanent members.

2. Regarding the criteria for inclusion, it recommended (i) contributions to UN efforts in preserving world peace and (ii) independent foreign policy. Recommendations of the Expert Group under Ford Foundation (1994)

3. Increase in the Security Council permanent membership from 5 to 10 and Security Council membership from 15 to 23.

4. Restricting the veto powers of the permanent members to issues concerning peace keeping and peace enforcement operations.

5. Setting up a team to keep track of the developments and warn the UN about exploding situations.

6. Constituting a rapid deployment force to tackle sudden eruption of conflicts.

7. Raising funds through taxes and fees.

8. Constitution of new Economic Council to coordinate the work carried out by UN agencies in monetary and trade policies. Declaration of the 50th Aanniversary of the UN (1995)

9. It reiterates the UN (1995) to save succeeding generations from the Scourge of war. It promises to give to the twenty first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the people in whose name it was established.

10. It recognizes the need to reform the UN to expand the Security Council and to continuously review its working methods to enhance its representative character, efficiency and transparency.
11. On self determination, the declaration clearly warns that this cannot be seen as authorization to actions that would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity of political unity of sovereign and independent states.

12. On terrorism it expresses the resolve to defeat the threats to states and people posed by terrorism in all its forms and manifestations like transactional organised crime, illegal, production and trade in amiss and drug trafficking.

13. On human rights, the declaration resolves to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms which are inherent to all human beings. It recognizes that democracy, human rights and development are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.

14. On non-proliferation and disarmament, it supports efforts on arms control, limitation and no-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

15. It advocates promoting methods and means for the peaceful settlement of disputes and enhancing the capabilities of the UN in preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building.

16. On development, investment and technology transfer, it resolves to promote an open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system and a framework for investment, transfer of technology and knowledge as well as enhanced co-operation in areas of development.

17. On environment and sustainable development, it recognizes that economic development, social development and environmental protection are inter dependent and mutually, reinforcing components of sustainable development.

18. Renner's World watches Report on Peace-keeping the UN and the international community will have to discuss and define a set of criteria which will trigger appropriate peace-keeping action if the UN is to be turned into peace-maker of first recourse, rather than peace-keeper of last resort.

19. Establishment of an early warning office that continuously monitors potential trouble spots around the world.

20. Setting up permanent and conflict resolution committees in each region of the world to defuse tensions before violence erupts. Deploying Peach-Keepers Pro-actively to Prevent Aggression.

21. Creation of a two-tier UN peace force consisting of a permanent, individually, recruited, non-combat race, as well as a specially trained back-up army made up of troop of contingents available to the Security Council on short notice. Establishing a regular annual peace-keeping budget with a reserve fund to cover unforeseen expenses.

Suggestions

A stronger research and advisory staff within the secretariat for monitoring political situation all over the world might be needed to keep potential conflict situations under constant review.

1. The Security Council should activate the procedures incorporated in chapter VI, whenever necessary rather than try to intervene after the outbreak of actual war (Iran-Iraq), when it is extremely difficult to stop the fighting. The Secretary General should be accorded a stronger position and better means to exercise authority. Permanent political offices in key regions, military observer teams, fact finding missions and military collective security forces could constitute a global emergency problem.

2. The UN should maintain and extend the sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities Activities and effort should be made to revive the post of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

3. A global law enforcement role for the UN should be elaborated focusing on the role of sanctions and military enforcement measures. The potential of the Military Staff Committee of the Security Council should be reviewed.

4. The role of UN peace-keeping forces could also be used to ensure that countries are not destabilized across frontiers. Future peacekeeping should normally be authorized and controlled by the Security Council.

5. They should play a neutral political role within the country where they are operating. The possibility of a permanent peace-keeping fund should be explored.

6. Veto decisions of Security Council should be used only on vital issues and procedural matters should be immune from it. The veto should be eliminated with respect to the admission of new members and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

7. The declining role of General Assembly called for a system of weighted voting's, hut it is difficult; to implement. If no change is made the effort will be to reduce the influence of the Assembly and to enhance the role of the Security Council.

8. To make the International court of justice more effective it is desirable that the members should agree to submit their legal disputes to it.

9. Other changes include the setting up a permanent fund to make its financial position secure and to improve the capacity of the United Nations to coordinate the large number of social and economic activities now being carried out by its organs and specialized agencies.

Conclusion

The United Nations, in order to live up to the challenges of tomorrow, needs certain changes towards anticipation of potential conflicts, promotion of negotiation and the formulation of general norms the international behaviour and the growing needs of regional co-operation. In fine, the UN should strive to become far more effective than it is today in the words of its charter: a centre for harmonizing the interests of nations.

Topic: The world the twenty-first century.

A significant intellectual advance in the discussion of democratic peace theory and the future of liberal ideas and institutions. After a century dominated by the struggle between liberal societies and their illiberal communist and fascist opponents, the importance of liberal ideology in international relations can hardly be doubted. Whether liberal politics and liberal economics will dominate the twenty-first century is one of the most important questions facing policymakers as they peer into their murky crystal balls. Mandelbaum makes a striking contribution to this discussion by broadening the concept of liberal society. Liberal political institutions and liberal economic practices are conventionally used to define a liberal order; Mandelbaum adds liberal security arrangements as a third, equally vital element for this order. Liberal security, in essence, requires among countries a structure of military and political agreements so dense that each member state can be confident about the capacities of the others. In this kind of system, which now exists in western and central Europe, nations are confident that their neighbors are unable to overturn the existing strategic balance. Such an order, Mandelbaum argues, is solid and stable enough to give states every security assurance that hard-nosed realists might demand. Liberal security policy — the origins of which Mandelbaum traces to Woodrow Wilson's program at the Versailles Conference — adds an important dimension to the arguments for democratic peace.

Mandelbaum is also to be commended for an epistemological modesty too rare in his field. For offensive realists, war is inevitable because it is hard-wired into the nature of the international system. Liberals have similarly sought to develop rigorous chains of logic to show the contrary. More effectively, Mandelbaum concludes that the twenty-first century will very likely see the continuing advance of liberal order. His reasoning is open to dispute at many points, but even those who disagree with his analysis will find much to admire in its clarity, consistency, and comprehensiveness.

The distribution of global power is fast changing. That much is certain. China and other developing nations are quickly ascending the pecking order. Meanwhile, the three pillars of the Western world - the United States, Europe, and Japan - are beset by a prolonged economic downturn and disaffected electorates. But despite widespread recognition of the changing global

landscape, opinions differ widely as to which country will emerge on top. As the twenty-first century unfolds, who will lead the pack?

Many analysts foresee a twenty-first century that will belong to China, whose decades of impressive economic growth make its steady rise seem unstoppable. Most American politicians, with the backing of commentators such as Robert Kagan and Robert Lieber, are quick to dismiss the prospects for a changing of the guard, insisting that U.S. hegemony is alive and well. They contend that the U.S. economy will snap back and that America's military superiority is untouchable. The dark horse candidates are India and Brazil. India will have the world's largest population by about 2025, while Brazil is blessed with abundant resources and a benign geopolitical environment. Both have democratic governments that may give them the legitimacy and good governance needed to make it to the top.

The absence of consensus over which country will oversee the coming world is just as it should be. That's because the twenty-first century will not be dominated by any country. The United States will do just fine, but the era of Western primacy is coming to an end. Meanwhile, none of the world's rising nations will have the combination of material and ideological strength needed to exercise global hegemony. And although ascending nations have forged a new grouping - the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) - to coordinate their policies and aggregate their muscle, they do not share a coherent vision of what comes next. They know what they do not want: the continuation of a world dominated by the West. But they are very unlikely to arrive at a common view of what they want instead. This century will not belong to the United States, China, India, Brazil, or anyone else; it will be no one's world.

The United States, due to its economic resilience, rising population, and military superiority, will make it into the top ranks for decades to come. Nonetheless, the supremacy that the United States and its Western allies have enjoyed since World War II is fast fading. During the second half of the twentieth century, the Western allies usually accounted for over two-thirds of global output. They now provide about half of global output - and soon much less.

In 2010, four out of the top five economies in the world came from the developed West - the United States, Japan, Germany, and France. Only one developing country - China, at number two - qualified for this exclusive club. In 2050, according to Goldman Sachs, the United States will be the only Western power to make it into the top five. China will be number one, followed - at a significant distance — by the United States, India, Brazil, and Russia.

Key aspects of this reordering are poised to occur sooner rather than later. China's wealth is expected to surpass that of the United States by the second half of the next decade. The World

Bank foresees the dollar, euro, and China's renminbi as co-equals in a "multi-currency" monetary system by 2025. Goldman Sachs predicts that the collective GDP of the top four developing countries — Brazil, China, India, and Russia(BRIC) - will match that of today's leading industrialized nations by 2032. The United States will no doubt find its way out of the ongoing slump. But it will bounce back into a global economy in the midst of a dramatic change in the pecking order.

If China is poised to sit atop the global economy, why not expect a Chinese century? The appeal of China's brand of state capitalism - its competence and performance - is offset by its lack of democratic legitimacy. China's success also depends on assets that many other countries lack - a communitarian ethic with deep roots in Confucian culture, a meritocratic leadership and bureaucracy, a vast labor pool, and a top-notch industrial and transportation infrastructure. Moreover, although Beijing will surely seek to extend its sway in its own neighborhood, China's ethnocentrism suggests that its hegemonic aspirations may well be only regional, not global, in scope.

Like China, India has an expansive labor pool at its disposal. And its embrace of democracy gives India an international appeal that China lacks. But India's democratic institutions are also a liability. Lethargic bureaucracies, social stratification, biting inequality, and striking linguistic and ethnic diversity make the Indian government weak and ineffective; New Delhi enjoys none of Beijing's purposeful efficiency. Indeed, India's private sector has thrived in spite of, not because of, its democratic institutions. The lack of good governance will ensure that India's rise is slow and bumpy.

India also resides in a dangerous neighborhood that will hem in its geopolitical ascent. Rivalry and territorial disputes with China, overt hostility from Pakistan, and proximity to Afghanistan and Iran will constrain New Delhi's statecraft and prevent India from straying too far from home.

Brazil is in important respects best set to emerge as a global trendsetter. It is a stable democracy, blessed with ample, land, labor, and natural resources. At least for now, Brasilia has found a developmental path that combines economic openness with redistribution programs aimed at alleviating inequality. And Brazil faces no geopolitical rivals and resides in a region that has been remarkably free of inter-state war.

But Brazil is not headed for the top ranks; its economy is expected to be five times smaller than that of China in 2050. And Brazil's benign location in South America cuts both ways. Its relative isolation will enable Brasilia to remain aloof from the fray set to ensue in Eurasia and the western Pacific as China, India, Russia, and Indonesia ascend. But its distance will also limit its

influence in this geopolitical heartland. Brazil is destined for regional hegemony, not global ambition.

Each of the world's main emerging powers is following its unique developmental path and pursuing its own interests, at least for now making the BRICS grouping little more than a talk-shop. Its summits regularly produce calls for a more equitable and representative global order. But BRICS members have yet to articulate, either individually or collectively, what that order might look like. And if and when these nations do fashion their own visions of a new global architecture, they would likely prove disparate and incompatible, denying "the rising rest" a consensus capable of coordinating their statecraft.

At least during this decade and the next, the United States will have more say than the BRICS in managing the coming redistribution in global power. But instead of fighting against the inevitable tide of change and seeking to extend the era of U.S. hegemony, Washington would be much wiser to help guide no one's world toward new forms of collective governance and cooperation. Widening the circle and peacefully arriving at the next world by design is far preferable to a competitive anarchy arrived at by default as multiple centers of power and the differing conceptions of order they represent vie for primacy.

Topic: Resource management in the Indian context

The process of using a company's resources in the most efficient way possible. These resources can include tangible resources such as goods and equipment, financial resources, and labor resources such as employees. Resource management can include ideas such as making sure one has enough physical resources for one's business, but not an overabundance so that products won't get used, or making sure that people are assigned to tasks that will keep them busy and not have too much downtime.

The Natural Resources Management (NRM) program of InsPIRE offers innovative management systems that for efficient utilization and conservation of India's natural resources, especially in issues related to agriculture, water, forest, biodiversity and wildlife management. The NRM program works closely with policy-makers, foresters, scientists, research institutions and non-governmental organizations in India and globally across several countries. The expertise of the group lies in working with rural communities, institutions, local & national NGOs, and the central & state governments providing services viz. Project Management, Sector Strategy & Policy Reviews, Technical Assistance, Program Implementation, Action Research, Assessments, Comprehensive Monitoring & Evaluation and Capacity Building.

Specifically, the strengths are in:

- Climate change adaptation
- Cliate-induced vulnerability and•resilience
- Forest management
- Biodiversity conservation
- Livelihood security
- Renewable Energy
- REDD+
- Gender development
- Soil and Water conservation
- Governance issues

With the global emphasis on climate change, the program has evolved itself over the years to include vulnerability assessments and identification of adaptation options into its area of work. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is another key area where the program has demonstrated its capability in the past. The Adaptation Group comprises of an inter-disciplinary team of professionals ranging from social sector & rural development, environmental management, renewable energy, economics and statistics. The group's wider mandate is to work towards contributing to the larger global process of building climate resilient communities, systems and processes that help adapt to & mitigate anthropogenic & climate-induced rural & urban vulnerabilities. To enhance the effectiveness of actions, conscious efforts are being taken by the group to undertake action research studies, vulnerability assessments and pilot-demonstrate successful adaptation strategies.

- Promoting adaptation through enhancing livelihoods & climate resilience
- Climate-induced vulnerability & risk assessments and designing adaptation strategies
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for Rural Development projects and Central & State Government programs
- Policy research on NRM, Climate change & gender issues
- Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) implementation
- Studies on Disaster Risk Reduction
- Research studies on REDD+
- Incentive-based mechanisms and environmental economics• Training and Capacity building

The group is working with policy makers such as the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Ministry of Power (MoP); International and bilateral / multilateral agencies such as DFID, UNDP, GTZ, JICA, KfW, USAID, IUCN, World Bank, European Commission, UNIDO, UNICEF, Oxfam India, Rockefeller Foundation and State Governments in order to implement & monitor important programs and provide policy inputs. A mix of action research studies, field implementation and policy research studies in the context of promoting adaptation and livelihood resilience have been undertaken in the past and continue to be. In a short span of two years, new & emerging areas and cross-sectoral themes & projects have been undertaken to suit the group's mandate. Project offices in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have also been established to carry out the body of works in the respective states.

Biodiversity Conservation Group

The Biodiversity Conservation Group was initiated as a new arm of Natural Resource Management division of InsPIRE Network for Environment in January 2007. With the objective to better address the issues related to loss and degeneration of the biological wealth of the nation, this group complements the existing efforts of InsPIRE Network for Environment in achieving its overall mission. The program envisions a biodiversity rich and ecologically secure India. With field presence in Arunachal Pradesh and Kerala, the group focuses on:

- Conservation of biodiversity in biologically rich terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems
- Promotion of enterprises that link conservation with livelihood security
- Promotion of new tools and instruments that enhances sustainable use of resources
- Assessment of impacts of climate change on biological diversity and
- Creating awareness on conservation of biological diversity
- Forest Management Group

The programmatic focus of the Forest Management (FM) Group has evolved considerably over the past few years. From a primarily forest management perspective, the FM group is now developing and implementing programs that encompass social, environmental and economic perspectives with regard to improved land husbandry and secure livelihoods for the poor. The group strives to be at the forefront of emerging innovative concepts and approaches by demonstrating them and facilitating knowledge sharing among stakeholders for their wider adoption.

The Landscape Approach, which recognizes and builds upon the inter-connectivity of systems, is currently one of the group's main thrust areas and it is investing itself at the grassroots level to

demonstrate the relevance and benefits of such an approach to policy makers, researchers and other practitioners. Systems for continuous learning is another of the group's areas of work and it has been involved with a variety of stakeholders – from local communities to policy makers and international researchers – towards achieving this. The FM group's projects aim at streamlining learning within project management to improve project implementation. Further, by building on collaborations with national and international institutions and established associations with relevant ministries and government departments, the group aims to contribute significantly towards improved development policy making, planning and implementation.

The achievements during the past ten Five Year Plans, particularly during the past four decades in the agriculture – the Green Revolution era, have been phenomenal. Yet, India is home to one-fourth of the world's hungry and poor. The economic growth has generally been non-inclusive during the past 15 years or so. This paradoxical situation has arisen essentially due to the decelerated and sluggish growth of the agriculture sector. Realizing that nearly 70 per cent of our population is still rural with farming as the principal source of livelihood and employment, employing 60 per cent of our labour force, "Faster and More Inclusive Growth", as highlighted in the XI Plan Approach Paper, can not be achieved unless the agriculture sector registers the stipulated growth rate of 4.1 per cent and above.

Degradation and erosion of natural resources, namely, land, water, forest, biodiversity (plant, animal and microbial genetic resources), livestock and fisheries along with air and sunlight – those parts of the natural world that are used to produce food and other valued goods and services and which are essential for our survival and prosperity, are one of the root causes of the agrarian crisis in the country. No current or intended use of natural resources should condemn our children to endless toil or deprivation. The report highlights that soil health enhancement holds the key to raising small farm productivity. The Second or Evergreen Revolution is not possible without overcoming the widespread macro- and micro-nutrient deficiencies – the "hidden hunger". It also highlights that it is essential to revitalize the soil system through organic residues and materials. Likewise integrated management of water for maximizing productivity per drop of water has been emphasized.

The Working Group, as contained in this Report, critically examined the status and management scenario of the natural resources especially under rainfed conditions, identified the major challenges and issues in watershed based management of natural resources, particularly the equity, sustainability, productivity, income and livelihood issues. New modes of governance and prospects of congruence and synergy among various NRM programmes, and new approaches, strategies and policy options and actions to overcome the challenges have been suggested for the XI Plan.

This Report underpins that the stipulated overall GDP and agricultural growth rates during the XI Plan cannot be achieved with the ongoing shrinking and degradation of country's natural resources. Interlinked as producers and service providers, the resources must be judiciously conserved, developed and harnessed. The Group has suggested the following four major NRM programmes for the XI Five Year Plan:

- Comprehensive integrated development of multiple natural resources based on watershed approach;
- Situation specific and need-based development of individual natural resources, outside the watershed;
- Integrated farming systems based natural resources management in rainfed areas, inside and outside the watershed; and
- Decentralized food security system based on local crops and commodities from rainfed areas duly backed up by price support, procurement and inclusion in the PDS.

Among other things, the Report highlights the importance of governance and the role of National Rainfed Area Authority, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, other relevant national bodies and programmes created in recent years, integration and harmonization of processes and guidelines, databases and resource mapping, information systems and participatory approaches in context of NRM. It is hoped that the proposed budgetary outlays and the expected outcomes will be affected during the XI Plan period.

Land

Of the country's total 142 m ha cultivated land, 57 m ha, 40 per cent of the total, is irrigated and the remaining 85 m ha is rainfed. Of the total geographical area of 329 m ha, about 146 m ha is classified as degraded, although varying estimates have been provided by different agencies. As generally agreed, the resources have been degrading fast, costing 11 to 26 per cent of the GDP during the 1980s and 1990s. Land distribution is highly skewed, more than 80 per cent of the farmers are small, marginal and sub-marginal and together own about 40 per cent of the total cultivated land, and increasing proportions of the holdings are becoming uneconomical. The soil health has been deteriorating, especially widespread micro-nutrient deficiencies (hidden hunger) and fast depleting carbon content, resulting in low and decelerated TFP growth rates.

Water

Water availability at the National level is reaching close to 1700 cubic meter (cu m) per capita – the threshold line, and if things do not improve, it will drop to water scarcity line by 2025. India annually receives about 350 million hectare meter (m h m) rain water, but almost half of it finds

its way back to the sea, whereas the per capita water storage in India is only 210 cu m against 1110 cu m in China and 3145 cu m in Brazil. With nearly 60 m ha of net irrigated area and irrigation using over 80 per cent of all fresh water, India ranks first in the world in irrigated acreage. There is huge gap of 14 m ha between irrigation potential created and utilized, and the irrigation intensity is only 135 per cent which should be raised to 175 per cent or more. Besides low water use efficiency, there is high inequity in water use and irrigation development, let alone the fast receding aquifers and blocks after blocks turning "dark" and "grey" in certain parts of the country. The following water management strategies and actions are recommended:

- Undertake scientific and comprehensive assessment of water resources, monitor and evaluate water extraction, storage and use, and enhance income per unit of water consumed.
- Prevent/ discourage unsustainable use of groundwater resources in critical zones, develop the resources in unexploited zones, andincrease awareness of farmers and other stakeholders about the value and scarcity of water and negative fallouts of improper use.
- Develop and adopt water use efficient cost-effective and eco-friendly crops, cropping patterns, farming systems and technologies.
- Integrate rain, surface and ground waters and promote conjunctive use of poor quality and polluted waters.
- Institutionalize participatory management of water (Water Users Associations, including proactive women's participation), rationalize water pricing and operational and maintenance charges and distribution of irrigation water and equitable access to water as a common resource.

Forests

Forests, the green cover, are the natural resource infrastructure for agriculture/primary production and rural economic growth. India, harbouring 16 major forest types – tropical, temperate, alpine etc., is one of the 17 mega diversity centres and two biodiversity hot spots of the world. Per capita forest area in the country (0.064 ha) is one-tenth of that of the world's average, and 41 per cent of the country's forest cover is degraded. Despite the high importance of forests as source of food, fuel, fodder and fibre, and of linking conservation with community based forestry, allocation to the forestry sub-sector has rather been meager, less than 1 per cent of the Plan size. Moreover, most of the budget has to come from the State Governments which seldom meet their commitments and the forests continue to suffer. The share of the Central Government should be increased to at least 50 per cent of the total requirement, and the Tribal Bill, 2005 should be fully implemented and linked with the NREGA.

Livestock

Livestock accounts for about 27 per cent of the Agricultural GDP and is positively egalitarian in its distribution and in ownership by women, and is a major pillar of income, food and employment security. Possessing the world's largest livestock population, India ranks first in milk production, fifth in egg production and seventh in meat production. Total livestock output has been growing at a much faster rate of 3.6 per cent per annum against only 1.1 per cent registered for the crops sub-sector during the past decade. The targeted overall agricultural annual growth rate of 4.1 per cent during the XI Plan is stipulated to be achieved through a growth rate of about 8 per cent in the livestock sub-sector. In order to double the current growth rate to achieve the XI Plan target, constraints to increased livestock production and productivity (which is one-third of that of the world average) must be properly identified and addressed. Institutional supports and policy actions such as livestock insurance, market and price support, Livestock Feed and Fodder Corporation, Fodder Banks, Small Holder's Poultry Estates, etc. are needed towards achieving the rapid and inclusive growth.

Fisheries

Fisheries (53 per cent of the production from aquaculture) contribute significantly to food, nutrition, economic and employment securities, and fortunately are one of the fastest growing agricultural sub-sectors during the last three decades. Currently, fisheries contribute 4.6 per cent of the agricultural GDP, provide employment security to about 11 million people and annually earn foreign exchange worth Rs. 7,300 crore – about one-fifth of the value of the National agricultural export. The overall growth rate of fish production could be doubled to about 8 per cent towards achieving the overall agricultural growth rate of 4.1 per cent during the XI Plan. The following constraints should, however, be addressed to harness the potential: siltation and pollution of water bodies, poor management of production-processing-distribution chain, poor quality control of fish seed and feed, under-exploitation of available species such as cold water fishes like trout and Mahseer and air-breathing fishes like Mangur.

Weak infrastructure for landing and marketing and inadequate access to water bodies/tanks, multi-user conflicts and inappropriate leasing policies are other important constraints. Suitable leasing policies, reduced duties on feed and lower power tariffs can help accelerate production of scampi (prawn) in inland saline waterlogged areas, brackish water areas and other aquaculture systems, thus greatly contributing to employment, income and food security.

The newly established National Fisheries Development Board, among other things, should strongly support Integrated Coastal Zone Management and Aquarian Reforms, as also suggested by NCF.

Proposed Strategies and Interventions for NRM in the XI Plan

The "business as usual" will not do. NRM, particularly through the watershed approach, needs major adjustments and shifts in the strategies and approaches. The programme should be divided into three components:

- Comprehensive integrated development of multiple natural resources on watershed basis;
- Situation specific and need-based development of individual resources (out side the watersheds); and
- Integrated crop-livestock-fish-biomass farming system based management of natural resources, especially in rainfed areas (inside and outside the watershed programmes).
- A differentiated and need-based approach with substantial investment in natural resource management both in irrigated and rainfed areas in watershed as well as beyond watershed programmes is called for. The following programmatic interventions are suggested separately for each component:

Comprehensive Management of Natural Resources

The major steps are:

- Delineation, codification and prioritization of sub-watersheds for the preparation of perspective plan at the State level.
- Separation of capacity building phase from main implementation phase.
- Consideration of sub-watershed as a geo-hydrological unit at Programme Implementing Agency level and revenue village as a management unit at Watershed Committee level.
- Gram Panchayat to play governance role while stakeholders groups (UG / SHG etc.) should carry out execution of their own works and be accountable to Gram Sabha. Panchayatas should help to create durable assets in watersheds by linking the programme with NREGS.
- Preparation of State specific process guidelines to build upon their strengths and experiences.
- Integration of small size forest areas under watershed programmes through CFM in place of JFM as being successfully practiced in Andhra Pradesh.
- Enhancement in project duration from 5 to 10 years for adoption of comprehensive approach.
- Organisation of CBOs into sustainable bodies as a pre-project activity through complementary funding.

Location Specific Management of Natural Resources

The following need-based treatments, outside of watersheds, are priority actions:

- Reclamation of problem soils (saline, alkaline, acidic etc.); greater attention is called for acidic soils as the acidification is spreading fast.
- Comprehensive development of degraded lands assigned to resource poor families under land distribution programmes.
- Development of common land with revenue department through adequate investment.
- Revival of small size indigenous water harvesting structures.
- Investment on community borewells to retain ground water as a common property resource.

Towards Inclusiveness

Special attention should be paid towards inclusiveness and gender mainstreaming within the context of natural resource management. For this purpose, the following specific steps may be taken: (i) introducing special package for the communities which received land through distribution of surplus land, (ii) cultivation of fallow land for food crops through women SHGs, (iii) increased emphasis on tribal dominated forest based economy, (iv) resolving legal complications in treating CPR, (v) provision of drinking water to all households, (vi) equitable distribution of harvested water for irrigation and other livelihoods, (vii) provision of additional fund as seed money to women SHGs for development of livelihoods of only resource poor families, and (viii) equitable distribution of the additional resource that has been created in the watershed, even as prior right to previously existing resources are recognized and left largely undisturbed within a positive sum game framework.

Ensuring Sustainability

Emphasis should be placed equally on three majorcomponents: (i) institution and capacity building at different levels, (ii) management of natural resources and not merely development of natural resources and (iii) diversification and intensification of farming system as an integral part of natural resource management programme. The NREGS, both supporting skilled and unskilled jobs, should be integrated with the watershed programmes particularly for supporting the activities in the “post-treatment” phase. The PRIs should ensure this integration at the grassroot level. Experienced NGOs should also be involved in facilitating bottom-up planning and operations.

Topic: Corruption in India rooted deeply

One would say the corruption in India has an ancient linkage, and it is deeply rooted in our tradition. The author of the Arthasastra made some remarks on government officials of his time

which are relevant even today: “Just as it is impossible not to taste the honey or the poison that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a government servant not to eat up at least a bit of the king’s revenue. These in the post-war world became only bolder while eating up government money and accepting bribes. A corrupt person is termed immoral, dishonest and unscrupulous in his dealings. His disregard for honesty, righteousness and truth results in his alienation from society. He is treated with contempt. But as erosion of values leads to decadence, remedies for the social malaise remain elusive, and so no amount of contempt can eradicate corruption which is a symptom of decadence.

When we ask a question to ourselves that why India is still not a developed nation even after 60 years of independence? Why there is not enough development when India is having immense potential and talent at par with any developed nation has? The answer is very simple. The main culprit behind this situation is widespread corruption in every field. To get an admission in a college…to get a legal paper from a Government office…to get an approval for the construction of a house…to get an electricity connection…to do an urgent surgery for life saving……. Thus not even nook and corner of the daily life is spared from this evil. Now, people so adapted and well familiar with the situation and ready to give bribe without any hesitation and accepted as a part of the system. They also will demand bribe when they are sitting in a decisive position. This is the epicenter of this deadly evil which spread over the entire system from executive to class IV level. The only motive to become a people’s representative, a civil servant or even an attender is how to get the undeserved money.

The more dangerous fact…bribes and corruption got reputation in society. If there is an official who doesn’t accepts bribe…he will be isolated even in public and will have an image of useless person.In today’s India these officials representing all government departments are very close to the most corrupt businessmen who are too unscrupulous to let any opportunity of amassing profits slip.

This collusion broadens the base of the vicious circle and corruption spreads ‘like wild fire to engulf the entire society. The political and social guardians depend only too much on the richer communities and they look indulgently on while these communities hold the entire society and the government to ransom. Corruption starts at the top and percolates down to the whole society. Such corruption cannot be confined to the towns alone. It is as widespread in the villages where the dishonest officials and the traders carry the germs of the disease. Economic need and exposure to western luxuries are tempting factors in society for the youth. They try to find means and ways to make money, however deceptive or defective these methods may be. It is meaningless to blame the system; it is the defect of people who handle the same. A number of reasons like lack of stringent legislation, slow and delayed judicial systems, poverty, illiteracy,

lack of faith in “Dharma” or righteousness, greedy mind and a tendency to be smart are responsible behind corruption.It is not prevalent in India only but Corruption is today a world-wide phenomenon.

Let us diagnose what are the reasons that the venom of corruption is running so deep in our veins?

(1) Democracy: First of all roots of corruption are buried in our democratic setup. To contest election lot of money is required and due to this ordinary people can’t contest election and those who stand in elections either have ancestral money or have earned this money through corrupt practices. Mayawati who was a poor school teacher few years ago has now a property of 52 crore ‘, Prakash singh badal the former chief minister of Punjab has a property worth 1000 crore ‘, Mulayam singh Yadav has a property of billions of ‘. These are just few examples to quote, but the ground reality is that 300 M.P’s in 15th Loksabha are multi millionaires. What do you think these people are pouring their money for charity? Certainly not, for them this is an investment for which they will get rich dividend. This dividend is in the form of amount earned through manipulation of govt. Funds, taking bribe, settling their keens on good positions, allotting government contracts to fraud and unqualified companies, take money for appointing officers on various posts.

(2) Bourgeoisie society: System always stems from top to bottom. There is a proverb in Sanskrit” which means behavior of elite class people is considered as standard by lower class people and hence they follow it as ideal behavior. Today’s kings are our honorable M.P’s, M.L.A’s. and most of them are corrupt and shares criminal background (according to a survey of an independent NGO, 150 MP’s in 15th Loksabha have criminal records). Not only politicians but bureaucrats, commanders of armed forces and judges too are submerged in the mud of corruption. One retired Chief Justice of India had said that 20% judges of Supreme Court are corrupt and corruption is more ubiquitous in lower rungs of judiciary. Indian Army which was considered to be the holy cow of Indian democracy is also not spared from this. In such situation people feel that it is justifiable for them to indulge in corruption because if those who are on the top of hierarchy don’t think about ethics than whom are we to care for ethics?

(3) Corruption is an environmental phenomenon: A new born baby does not have notions of right and wrong but as it grows older gradually it learns what is socially acceptable and what is not. This social learning plays very important role in growth of civic sense. Have you ever wondered why is it that the person who breaks traffic rules in India, when goes to Singapore behaves very decently? No, it’s not just the fear of fine that is restraining him but actually in India most of the

people breaks the traffic laws and therefore no one is ashamed of it because everybody else is doing the same, where as in Singapore everyone follows the public etiquette and the law of land and hence no one dares to go against established norms of social behavior. In the countries like Denmark and Netherlands (which are least corrupt countries) corruption is considered as social evil and those who are involved in corruption have to face a kind of social boycott, hence very few people dare to indulge in corrupt practices. Unfortunately in India publicly we criticize politicians, bureaucrats and corporate for their corruption but privately people admire those who have earned money through illegal means. In such conditions corruption is bound to increase in society and as I said earlier corrupt people come from within the society. To quote one senior judge of Supreme Court "judges too stay in society and share same social and moral values which other people share and if corruption is there in the society than it is going to be reflected in judiciary also, since we have not came from the heaven".

(4) Impotent and infertile laws: there are many laws to curtail corruption but unfortunately they are teeth less. They have so many loop holes that corrupt people easily escape from it and even if some of them are punished it take years to culminate the judicial process. If any politician or an officer of central government is found to be indulged in to corruption then complaint cannot be filed against them without the permission of central government. Central Vigilance Commission who is an independent agency to look after the cases of corruption in the central government employees can only give recommendation to concerned department regarding action to be taken on their officer, but its recommendation are not binding. Institutions like CBI, Anti Corruption Bureau, Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax department and various other agencies are there to prevent corruption and financial irregularities, but there is lot of political interference in these agencies. Appointment, transfers and promotion of officers of these agencies is in the hands of politicians. CBI has become an agent of ruling party; it is used frequently to settle the score with opposition. In the past many instances have taken place when CBI has filled or withdrawn cases on people at the will of central government (remember Quatrochchi, Mulayam Singh and Mayawati case). Recent appointment of P.J Thomas as CVC is a vivid example of growing political interference in constitutional appointments. Thomas is accused of palm oil corruption case when he was chief secretary of Kerala and such person is appointed as CVC of India, whereas according to rules the person against whom FIR is filled is not even eligible for promotion.

It is shameful that the officials meant for administering public welfare themselves provide enough scope to the offenders to commit the offence and go scot-free, for equal compensation that they get from the offenders. Here, if the statute provides severe punishment (more than the one provided to the offender) to the erring official, perhaps, corruption could be

minimised.Society itself has had a drastic change in its behaviour today, to what it was earlier. The need to be morally upright is irrelevant, under the speed of its activity.

Let us glance through some statistics of corruption so that you understand the intensity and range of corruption in India. Media has provided lot of news and statistics about all the scams mentioned below so I will not elaborate it much.

- 2G Spectrum scam - 1,76,465 crore ‘
- Common Wealth Games- 70,000 crore ‘
- Madhu koda’s scam- 8000 crore ‘
- Abdul karim Telgi fake stamp paper scam- 32000 crore ‘
- Scorpion submarine scam- 18,000 crore ‘ (Accused former naval chief Admiral Sushil kumar)
- Sukhna land scam and Adarsh land scam- involves Armed forces land worth thousands of crore ‘ And also involves top Army commanders like General Deepak Kapoor, Lt. General P.K Rath, Lt. General Shantanu Chaudhri, Lt. General Avdhesh Prakash and As many others.

Remedies

Corruption cannot be abolished overnight, first, political parties should take the responsibility and highly principled & determined personalities have to lead the executive. With persistent efforts, the mindset of the public has to change. Can’t say how much time it will take… this evil spread over and established by taking 50 years…any way let us transfer the hope and luck to next generation. There are many legal as well as illegal means and methods with which one can come out unscathed after committing any offence. It requires only a management skill to convince the right forums. Therefore, if society has to be cleansed from being immorality and illegal doings, just legislation, however stringent will not help. The resistance to commit offences should be developed from one’s conscience or heart and it can never be created fully by legislation. Hence, inculcating moral values in people right from infancy could provide the remedy over a period of time. If the economic levels of the society could be improved, so that luxuries become basics and the value for them also become affordable, corruption would be unnecessary.

Democratic spirit can flourish only in an environment of openness and trust. Every citizen should know what the administrators, working under the overall control of people’s representatives, are doing. Since administration in a democracy serves the public interest, there is no need or justification for hiding the decision making process from the public scrutiny Transparency in public administration will bring about a fundamental change in the attitude of people. Tenets of transparency will require the civil servants to publicly display the names of beneficiaries of a

development scheme along with selection criteria and the procedure for making the selection. The requirement for public disclosure will ensure that civil servants take correct and defensible decisions. They will, henceforth treat all the citizens as their masters and they will have to keep them in good humour if they have to retain their jobs and privileges. Government agencies are financed by taxes and levies imposed on citizens. They are, therefore, answerable and accountable to the public for their acts of omission and commission. Freedom of Information Act will put premium on probity and integrity in the functioning of the civil servants. Since all their activities sub serve the public interest they have nothing to hide. They will readily supply all the information about government policies and decisions to the people whenever approached by them. People will then give them respect and recognition that they rightly deserve. It is only the dishonest and the devious that would be hard pressed to hide their partisan decisions.

In a modern welfare and development administration, the government provides a large number of services to the citizens. If these services are indifferently or inefficiently performed, people can rightfully protest and complain. They can insist on optimum utilization of the taxes and service charges paid by them to finance the civic services like water supply, power supply, sanitation and public health care. Dereliction of duty by public servants will be immediately detected and publicized and criticized by the public. It will put a tremendous pressure on the civil servants to perform or lose their face or even their jobs. The advancement of Information technology is very much conducive to the successful implementation of the Right to Information if enacted by the government now. The storage, retrieval and dissemination of vast amount of information have been greatly facilitated by the successive improvement in computers. Since the enforcement of Right to Information requires an enabling Freedom of Information Act, the existing government can always formulate the provisions of the Act in such a way as to leave for the government sufficient leeway to conceal many decisions or decision making processes from public scrutiny. The Freedom of Information Bill, which has been presented to the Parliament, has a very long list of exceptional situations wherein it is not incumbent upon the government agencies to part with information. It is, however, expected that once the people get used to obtain information contained in the government files, their appetite for information will be whetted and they will ask for more information. Lokpal can be another milestone towards abolishing corruption from India. After diagnosis of disease it is necessary to talk about cure, so what are the measures to reduce corruption?

(1) Strengthening of R.T.I: Right to information act 2005 is a revolutionary law which has penetrated in the age old secrecy regime of bureaucracy, but people still doesn’t have proper knowledge about it. For this information about profile and use of R.T.I should be included in curriculum of schools and colleges, R.T.I help centers needs to be established at village, taluka,

ward (in urban and metropolitan areas) and district level. Government services and departments who are exempted from the preview of R.T.I needs to be shortened. The process of Computerization and digitalization of government records needs to be initiated.

(2) Lokpal: Indian system of Lokpal is based on Scandinavian Ombudsman system. 1st Administrative reform commission had recommended to enact the law and establish the institution of lokpal to permanently end corruption.

(3) Reforms in police machinery: as per the recommendations of supreme court and National police commission, police establishment board should be established which will look after the matters of appointment, promotion, transfer, suspension and dismissal so that political interference in the work of investigating agencies like CBI and Anti Corruption bureau can be reduced. Police officers should be provided with fix tenure of minimum 3 years so that menace of punishment posting and frequent transfer can be overcome.

(4) More powers to C&AG: C&AG means Comptroller and Auditor General, who as a comptroller controls the money issued for the spending purpose and as an auditor audits the government accounts. In Britain C&AG has both the powers i.e. power of comptroller and power of auditor but unfortunately in India C&AG only audits the government accounts and give its recommendation to parliament, then it becomes duty of parliament to take action on the report of C&AG, but in parliament ruling party either due to their majority or with the connivance of opposition suppress it and matter is rejected as C&AG's over cautiousness.

(5) Right to recall: similar to U.S India should also enact a law of right to recall so that those M.P's and M.L.A's who are not working properly can be called back by the people of their constituency. So that fraud M.P's and M.L.A's like Govinda who shows there face only during election campaign can be get rid of. For this in every constituency one representative committee of some highly educated and respected people has to be created which will keep record of promises and commitments done by their leader during election campaign and will present peoples wishes and their problem to the elected representative and if he/she doesn't work properly than he/she can called back by a referendum.

(6) People's awareness: Last but not least is people's awareness and readiness to eradicate corruption. Nothing is going to change if people are not ready to change. Rather than blaming the system and politicians we should first fix our responsibility for the pathetic situation of the country. Corrupt people don't come from Mars and Venus, they are the product of our society and while blaming politicians and bureaucrats about their corruption we simply forget about our corruption. Who sells subsidized domestic gas cylinder in black market? Who gives bribe to

traffic constable after breaking traffic rules? Who travels in the train without ticket? Who manipulates electricity meters? The answer is “we the people of India”.

Somebody may argue that although common people also indulge in corruption but their corruption is not as serious as corruption of politicians and bureaucrats, since the bribe taken by traffic constable or amount earned through black marketing of domestic gas cylinder is negligible in comparison to frauds done by A.Raja or Suresh Kalmadi. To some extent this argument may seem to be true, but we should not forget here that indulging or not indulging in corruption is matter of conscience, but amount of bribe is matter of opportunity. It’s not that common men doesn’t indulge in corruption as huge as that of A.Raja’s, because his conscience doesn’t allows him to do so, it’s simply because he hasn’t got the opportunity to do such a great work. How can you say that a constable who takes 50 Rs. bribe will not take 5 crore or 500 crore ` bribe if given a chance? Remember the case of 1993 serial bomb blast, when RDX was landed on Mumbai dockyard with the help of 3 policemen by paying them millions of ` as bribe. The police men who took bribe were knowing that what harm RDX can cause to Mumbai but still there conscience didn’t stop them, because their conscience had died on the very same day when they had taken bribe for the first time.

It’s very easy to pelt stones at others but we need to look in our own conscience. If we have to eradicate corruption rather than releasing emotional outbursts of punishing politicians and wasting our brain in crap ideas like those mentioned above we need to accept the responsibility on our shoulders too and from next time whenever we do anything wrong or illegal work we must think that we are no better than A.Raja and Suresh Kalmadi.

Topic: Occupy Movement : Danger Bell is Ringing

Whatever the original impulse behind Occupy Wall Street, or the speculation of what the movement might become, this much is true: The groups of protesters, now camping or hanging out in many U.S. cities, and the police agencies that have responsibility for public safety and order, are both shifting into new postures of action and response. Whether that evolving chemistry will push things toward more confrontation remains unclear. But the combination new participants, new police tactics is clearly opening an uncertain chapter in a story that from its inception has embraced the notion of unplanned, unscripted civil action.

The Occupy movement is an international protest movement which is primarily directed against economic and social inequality. The first Occupy protest to be widely covered was Occupy Wall Street in New York City, taking place on September 17, 2011. By October 9, Occupy protests had taken place or were ongoing in over 95 cities across 82 countries, and over 600 communities in the United States. As of December 1 the Meetup page “Occupy Together” listed 2,686 Occupy

communities worldwide. The movement was initiated by the Canadian activist group Adbusters, and partly inspired by the Arab Spring, especially Cairo's Tahrir Square protests, and the Spanish Indignants. The movement commonly uses the slogan We are the 99%, the Occupy hashtag format, and organizes through websites such as "Occupy Together". According to the Washington Post, the movement, which has been described as a "democratic awakening" by Cornel West, is difficult to distill to a few demands.

On May 30, 2011, a leader in the Spanish Indignant movement, inspired by the Arab Spring, made a call for a worldwide protest on October 15. In mid-2011, the Canadian-based group Adbusters Media Foundation, best known for its advertisement-free anti-consumerist magazine Adbusters, proposed a peaceful occupation of Wall Street to protest corporate influence on democracy, address a growing disparity in wealth, and the absence of legal repercussions behind the recent global financial crisis. "One of the inspirations for the movement was the Democracy Village set up in 2010, outside the British Parliament in London. The first protest was held at Zuccotti Park in New York City on September 17, 2011. The phrase "The 99%" is a political slogan used by protesters of the Occupy movement. It was originally launched as a Tumbler blog page in late August of 2011. It refers to the concentration of wealth among the top 1% of income earners compared to the other 99 percent; the top 1 percent of income earners nearly tripled after-tax income over the last thirty years according to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report. The report was released just as concerns of the Occupy Wall Street movement were beginning to enter the national political debate. According to the CBO, between 1979 and 2007 the incomes of the top 1% of Americans grew by an average of 275%. During the same time period, the 60% of Americans in the middle of the income scale saw their income rise by 40%. Since 1979 the average pre-tax income for the bottom 90% of households has decreased by $900, while that of the top 1% increased by over $700,000, as federal taxation became less progressive. Thus, the top 20% of Americans owned 85% of the country's wealth and the bottom 80% of the population owned 15%.

The movement has been described as having an "overriding commitment" to Participatory democracy. Much of the movement's democratic process occurs in "working groups," where any protestor is able to have their say. Important decisions are often taken at "General assemblies", which can themselves be informed by the findings of multiple working groups. General assemblies take place at most Occupy sites every evening at 7PM. Decisions are made using the consensus model of direct democracy, waving hands in various simple signals and operating with discussion facilitators rather than leaders, a system that may have originated in the Quaker movement several centuries ago.

Impact

In the United States, the protests have helped shift the national dialogue from the deficit to economic problems many ordinary Americans face, such as unemployment, the large amount of student and other personal debt that burdens middle class and working class Americans, and other major issues of social inequality, such as homelessness. The movement appears to have generated a national conversation about income inequality, as evidenced by the fact that print and broadcast news mentioned the term "income inequality" more than five times more often during the last week of October 2011 than during the week before the occupation began.

The increased public focus on the growing income gap between economic elites and the middle class and on the importance of the rights of ordinary workers brought about by the Occupy Movement gave a significant boost to organized labor's campaign to repeal an anti-labor union law passed in the State of Ohio known as Ohio Senate Bill 5 (SB5). In the November 2011 elections, Ohio voters repealed SB 5. In November 2011, U.S. Congressman Ted Deutch, member of the House Judiciary Committee, introduced the "Outlawing Corporate Cash Undermining the Public Interest in our Elections and Democracy (OCCUPIED) Constitutional Amendment," which would overturn the Citizens United Supreme Court decision recognizing corporate constitutionally-protected free speech rights and would ban corporate money from the electoral process.

Where India stands

India has very unequal distribution of wealth as well. In Bihar and Orissa, the country's poorest states, at least half of the population is estimated to be under the poverty line. (This should be contrasted with only 10% in some other states). Although the rate of poverty has decreased since Independence, steady population growth means that the total number of Indians in poverty have increased. Wealth is often a crucial factor in human security. The poorest people in India are those with extremely limited resources, in terms of land, education, or social networks. If the poor are unable to make enough income to cover their most basic needs (such as food, water, fuel, shelter), it is much more difficult for them to access their right to education, health, and political participation. Likewise, it is hard for people to demand basic needs from the government if they don't have freedom.

In support, the inequality measure of Gini coefficient (with values of zero for no inequality, and one for extreme inequality) on the basis of NSS consumption data is usually cited. This Gini coefficient in 2004-05 was 0.325, and is indeed lower than in many developing countries, including China, and by constant repetition, both in national and international documents and the financial press, this has become part of the folklore about Indian inequality. But there are reasons

to believe that the NSS data under-represent the rich, and in any case while for other developing countries the Gini coefficient often refers to income distribution, India's refers to distribution of consumption expenditure, which is usually less than that of income (partly because the rich tend to save more than the poor).

But thically and socially one is more interested in inequality of opportunity rather than that of outcome (like income). After all, with the same opportunity two people can end up with different incomes, simply because one is more ambitious and hard-working than the other, and many of us may not be too worried about that as long as the opportunities are equalised. For Latin America some attempts have now been made to measure inequality of opportunity, but very little as yet in India. But in a country like India inequality of opportunity will surely depend on distribution of land, of education, and social identity — a child born in a rural landless adivasi family with very little scope for education will be severely handicapped in her life chances for no fault of her own.

So, it can be said that unequal distribution of wealth is a matter of great concern worldwide. It should be dealt with keeping this in mind that every individual has his human rights and it should not be suppressed. However, inequality of opportunity is rather damaging as that of unequal distribution of wealth. Ethically and socially one is more interested in inequality of opportunity rather than that of outcome (like income). After all, with the same opportunity two people can end up with different incomes, simply because one is more ambitious and hard-working than the other, and many of us may not be too worried about that as long as the opportunities are equalised.

Topic: Necessity of Uniform Civil Code

The Constitution of India has included the setting up of a Uniform Civil Code in the Directive Principles a/State Policy under Article 44. However, this is a non-enforceable right. The absence of a Uniform Civil Code is against the spirit of secularism and equality and leads to an involvement of religion ill politics. Still, India has not reached a level of a secular democracy where a uniform code can be implemented.

The society is still polarized. Minorities fear that the uniform code will be a violation of their rights. Therefore the code should be implemented when the demand comes from the minorities themselves. II should be a result of consensus and accommodation, not a unilateral imposition. The need for a Uniform Civil code in India has been discussed and debated several times and it still remains one of the most controversial issues mentioned in our Constitution.

The Indian Constitution includes the setting up of a Uniform Civil Code for its citizens in Part IV – The Directive Principles of State Policy. The legal nature of the Directive Principles is such that it cannot be enforced by any court and therefore these .are non- justifiable rights. The

Constitution further calls upon the State to apply these principles in making laws as these principles are fundamental in the governance of the country.

The Uniform Civil Code states

Article 44, which deals with the Uniform Civil Code states: "The State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens, a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India". The Uniform Civil Code is meant to constitute a legal framework of. Secular laws which shall govern activities like marriage, inheritance and divorce which are presently controlled by personal laws of various religions.

One of the fundamental problems with the absence of a Uniform Civil Code applicable throughout India is that it goes against the concept of equality which is one of the basic tenets' of our Constitution. The people of India are of different religions and faiths. They are governed by different sets of personal laws in respect of matters relating to family affairs. i.e. marriage, divorce, succession etc.

Law relating to marriage and /or divorce has been codified in different enactments applicable to people of different religions. These are: The Indian Christian Marriage Act: 1872, The Indian Succession Act, 1925, The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986 etc.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir, but also applies to the citizens of India domiciled in Jammu and Kashmir. Persons governed by this Act can specifically register marriage under the said Act even though they may be of different religious faiths. By having different personal laws for different religions we are, in a sense undermining the credibility of the secular ethos of India. There should be an element of uniformity governing such activities and ideally this should be administered by the State. In fact we find that no serious efforts have been made by government to formulate a Uniform Civil Code for all the citizens of India. Muslims have their own personal law for marriage and divorce. The problem with the personal laws is that in most cases, women are at the receiving end because of the biased nature of these laws. This became a matter of debate especially after the Supreme COUl12 S verdict in the Shah Bano case.

The case was about the right to maintenance after divorce, filed by a Muslim woman. According to the Muslim Personal Law, the husband was not obliged to pay the maintenance after the divorce. This was challenged in the Court and the Court ordered that a husband has to provide maintenance for a divorced wife with no means of income according to Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

In this case the Court observed that a Uniform Civil Code would remove disparate loyalties to laws which have conflicting ideologies. The judgment created uproar among the conservative sections of the Muslim community. However, the issue pitch forked' the Uniform Civil Code issue into prominence. Discrimination against women is found not only in Muslim Personal Law. Divorce in Christianity, governed by the Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872, blatantly discriminates against women. For a Christian woman to get divorce, she will have to prove charges against her husband on adultery along with bigamy', incest cruelty change of religion, etc.

However, a husband is required to prove charges of adultery alone. Muslim men also have the right of triple talaq (divorce) under their personal law. These discriminatory practices further augment' the position in favor of introducing a Uniform Civil Code. The Uniform Civil Code was made a non-justifiable right under the Directive Principles of State Policy by our founding fathers keeping in mind certain crucial factors. India's independence in 1947 was followed by large-scale religious riots which was the result of the Partition.

As a result the environment that prevailed in the country when the Constitution was framed was not conducive enough for the State to take over the personal laws of various religions. Therefore the issue of the civil code was included in the Directive Principles leaving the task to the future generations, when the situation will stabilize. Still, time is not ripe for the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code.

Polarization in the society along religious lines is still very much alive in our country. The destruction of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, a number of communal riots like the Mumbai riots and the Gujarat riots are clear pointers towards the fact that India is yet to achieve the level of a stable and mature secular democracy. If the Uniform Civil Code is introduced in such a society, it may lead to further complications.

After the Supreme Court's reiteration of the importance of the Uniform Civil Code, Syed Shahabuddin, President of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) argued that since the Constitution puts together the freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, it is impossible to ignore religious faiths based on scriptures. Moreover, for Indians, religion is not just a casual part of their personal life.

Here religion plays a primary role in the lives of most of the people. Therefore the introduction of the civil code should be a well-thought out and careful process. Another argument against the Uniform Civil Code is that its imposition will be a violation of Fundamental Rights envisaged by the Constitution. Fundamental Rights are justifiable rights and are regarded as the most important rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Those people who argue against the Uniform

Civil Code are of the opinion that for believers, matters like marriage, divorce and inheritance are religious affairs and the Constitution guarantees freedom of such activities and therefore the Uniform Civil Code will be a violation of that.

Religion is an extremely sensitive issue requiring the most delicate handling. Uniform Civil Code is a issue which requires extensive and exhaustive consultations between various religious groups, within the religions and between the State and the religious groups. The minorities should not feel that the regime is imposing the code on them. The Uniform Civil Code can be successfully introduced only after attaining improved levels of literacy, awareness on various socio-political issues and increased social mobility.

Any unilateral attempt towards the imposition of the Uniform Civil Code will give the vested interests an opportunity to whip up communal passions and thereby create further problems. There are political parties and leaders who are always eager to hijack such issues to improve their vote banks. Apart from the minority religious group there are also communities belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who oppose the Uniform Civil Code fearing that the code may undermine many of their age-old traditional practices.

Thus, it is imperative that the demand for the Uniform Civil Code should come from the minority communities themselves. It can start with a revision of the personal laws by the minorities concerned. Therefore, if the Uniform Civil Code is to be introduced in India, it should be the result of a proper consensus and enlightened discussions.

A UCC will most affect:

Marriage : In almost all recent cases where the need for a UCC has been emphasised women were at the receiving end of torture in the garb of religious immunity. Apart from the famous Shah Bano (1986) and Sarla Mudgal (1995) cases, there have been several other pleas by Hindu wives whose husbands converted to Islam only in order to get married again without divorcing the first wife.

Divorce : All major religions have their own laws that govern divorces within their own community, and there are separate regulations under the Special Marriage Act, 1956 regarding divorce in interfaith marriages. Under a common civil code, one law would govern all divorces.

Inheritance : Patriarchy is the basis of personal law, regardless of community. Inheritance laws have created less noise and debate than marriage and divorce laws, mainly because in this regard social inequity has cut across communities. And women, for most part repressed and unaware of even the rights that exist, have been unable to secure them.

Adoption : Of all aspects of personal laws, those of guardianship, custody of children and adoption are the most inextricably linked to religion and culture. This is about bloodlines and perpetuation. And with children and young people involved, can have serious implications. A

UCC will affect laws on adoption and therein could lie a lot of resistance. As the UCC debate gathers steam, timesofindia.com readers react. The comments range from outright rejections and emphatic “yesses” to deep introspections.

• Personal laws skewed against women
• Code of Honour
• Common code need of the hour: BJP
• UP Oppn leader opposes uniform civil code.

The UCC will affect only personal laws based on religion - those relating to marriage, divorce, adoption and inheritance. Criminal and civil laws are already common for all citizens. The advocates of such a code cite Article 44 of the Constitution under Directive Principles of State Policy, which provides: The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

Those against point out that the endeavour talks of an ideal situation, but leaves the matter to the state’s discretion. They have also taken umbrage at the Supreme Court observing on July 21 that Parliament is yet to frame a uniform civil code. The matter is far more political than legal. Everytime the issue has come up there have been angry words from both sides of the debate. Politically, the BJP and some allied parties like the Shiv Sena and Jayalalitha’s AIADMK. On the other side, parties like the Congress and Left Front that depend a great deal on the minority vote, are against it.

The real social opposition each time has come from the Muslim community that sees any attempt to bring a UCC as an attack on its religious rights. The tussle has its roots primarily in the Shah Bano case of the 1980s when an old Muslim woman went to court against the way her husband had divorced her. In 1978, 65-year-old Shah Bano demanded alimony from her husband, who had abandoned her for another woman. According to Muslim law, Shah Bano was entitled to three months’ maintenance after over 40 years of marriage.

Let’s face it. For all the progress that is claimed to have been made in India, the fact remains that ours is a patriarchal society in which the woman counts for very little. It could be Imrana, Indira or Irene, the manifestations could be varied, but the real malaise is that violence against women — physical, emotional and verbal — has the tacit approval of society. This is a social evil that needs to be eliminated through every channel available — through changes in legislation, by public discourse, via civil society participation and of course, political will. For far too long women have been victimised and justice has been denied to them under the pretence of personal law. To make matters worse, caste panchayats churn out verdicts that violate the law of the land, right under our noses, and everyone carries on as if it is business as usual. Are we going to allow an alternative judicial system? Ex-attorney general Soli Sorabjee has said: “Personal laws do not

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enjoy any immunity from compliance with constitutional obligations guaranteeing fundamental rights. Besides, one of the fundamental duties prescribed by the Constitution is to 'renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women' under Article 51 A (e)". What is being done about this?

Political parties certainly have a right to protect their constituencies; where they err is in believing that their security lies in appeasing the most regressive sections of the vote bank. However, the tide has changed since the infamous Shah Bano case. The obscurantist brigade is coming under question, and women are particularly angry. Political parties need to read the writing on the wall and strengthen the hands of women who are asking for reforms, instead of appeasing retrograde sections of the community. Otherwise they will lose the support base they claim to nurture.

In the wake of the Imrana case I have been among Muslim women working at the grass roots. It is heartening to meet burqa -clad women who swear allegiance to Islam and the Qur'an but are unequivocal in their refusal to accept the retrograde decrees of clerics. That the Darululum Deoband backtracked in the Imrana case (they now claim no fatwa was issued) is in no small measure due to the outcry from within the Muslim community In case after case, the clergy, instead of acting with justice and compassion towards women, seeks only to exercise its writ with coercion. When decrees made in the name of religion violate basic human dignity, they only expose religion to ridicule and make a laughing stock of the community.

It is in this context that we need to understand the issue of the uniform civilcode. The time has come to place personal laws of all religions under a scanner and reject those laws that violate the Constitution. Personal laws of all religions discriminate against women on matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance and so on. There is an urgent need to cull out the just and equitable laws of all religions and form a blueprint for a uniform civil code based on gender justice. The Hindu code cannot be applied uniformly to all religions. On the other hand, triple talaq would have to go, as would polygamy and all the advantages that accrue to Hindu undivided families in matters of property and inheritance.

The framers of our Constitution did not impose the uniform civil code because it was believed that there was insecurity within minorities and that with time they would grow in confidence and articulate the need for reforms within the community. Unfortunately, each time a communal riot takes place and the perpetrators go scot-free, it shatters the confidence of minorities and halts the process of reform. But 58 years is a long time for women to wait for gender justice. We need a debate on a uniform civil code not because it is a magic wand with which all ills that besiege women will disappear, not because it will lead to integration as the sangh parivar claims it will

— unity need not imply a drab sameness — but because it will be an important step in freeing women from the shackles of a patriarchal society.

Uniform Civil Code for National Integration

Eventually, because of discrepancies in the personal law, numerous cases came before the courts. Long years ago, in the Shah Bano case, the Supreme Court held that Article 44 has remained as a dead letter. The then Chief Justice of India Mr. Y.V. Chandrachud observed that, "A common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to law which have conflicting ideologies". Demand for the Uniform Civil Code was resisted in full fury by the Muslim minority, with distinguished exceptions. In many instances the Supreme Court directed the Government of its Constitutional obligations to enact a Uniform Civil Code like Sarla Mudgal case, Mary Roy Case vs. State of Kerala, Jorden Deinddeh vs. S.S. Chopra, Pannalal Bansilal Case, etc.

The latest reminder of the Supreme Court, setting the cat amongst the pigeons, on the matter a Uniform Civil Code, was in the case of John Vallamattom vs. Union of India (AIR 2003 SC 2902). In that case Chief Justice Mr. V.N. Khare stated that, "We would like to state that Article 44 provides that the State shall endeavor to secure for all citizens a Uniform Civil Code throughout the territory of India. It is a matter of great regret that Article 44 of the Constitution has not been given effect to. Parliament is still to step in for framing a common civil code in the country. A common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing the contradictions based on ideologies."

Lamentably, the concept of a Uniform Civil Code is not made a Fundamental Right of the citizen but relegated to the position of a concept desirable but not enforceable by any court in the country. The world treads frontward, ever forward, while those damned "secularists" of ours have forced us back to the shameful sinister ages. Secularism, the corner stone of our nation and the radical locomotive of social democracy for integration are confused with and propagated by bigoted extremists as the tombstone of the body politic — a terrible outrage. If secularism ceases to be the bedrock of our Republic, Swaraj becomes a mirage. If we, as people do not belong to a single nation, politically cemented by a strong sense of human solidarity, we will splinter and founder. Our national campaign is not pampering majority malignancy or minority prejudices. We must be secular in every cell.

M.J. Akbar wrote: "It is a myth that Islamic law is not amendable to re-interpretation. Islam has always been a dynamic faith, not a static one and principles have been placed in context whenever needed." If the Shariat is to be strictly observed, a thief should have his hands cut off. Would today's fundamentalist Muslims in India agree to this being practiced? Diversity in

personal laws reinforces gender inequality and injustice. Furthermore, when criminal laws and some aspects of civil laws were common to the country as a whole then why the variation of personal laws? By accepting a Uniform Civil Code, the identity of no Muslim is threatened; only his social well-being is heightened and strengthened. Moreover, is not that what laws are made for?

Conclusion

In future, while implementing the Uniform Civil Code that has to be done, Shore nicely paraphrases: "A Uniform Civil Code should not be put together as the amalgam of or the common denominator of personal laws based on religion but as the Code that guarantees the best rights to all citizens, a Code in which each provision has been incorporated not because it is to be found in the Shariat or Manu or Christian or Parsi law but because on that matter it is the most humane and just provision we can think of, the one that is most in accord with good conscience, the one that is most likely to induce good conduct and creative flowering of the individual."

The melody of the communal unity, the beauty of religious amity and the security of Indian humanity by way of Uniform Civil Code for national integration — these glorious values are the mission and message to the nation. We should therefore struggle to sustain this supreme value so that we do not perish, as a people, by discordant ideology.

Topic: National Counter Terrorism Centre

India is located in a disturbed and unstable neighbourhood, which is rocked by tremors emanating from a variety of hostile organisations, internal as well as external. The main threat is from the jihadi fundamentalists sponsored by the covert warfare branches of the Pakistan Army and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) and its Indian offshoot, the Indian Mujahideen. Other extremist groups like Naxalites and tribal guerrillas also contribute to the quantum of overall threat. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) is the designated nodal agency in India for counter-terrorism and counter-intelligence, but the terrorist invasion of Mumbai on 26/11 graphically highlighted many serious deficiencies in Indian intelligence and security systems. It re-emphasised, once again, the need for refurbishment of the national counter-terrorism effort. The proposal for creation of such an agency at the national level to collate, analyse, integrate inputs from all intelligence sources at Central as well as state levels and plan coordinated counter-terrorist and counter-espionage operations had been amongst the important recommendations of the Kargil Study Group set up in 2001 to analyse the conflict and draw lessons from it. The initial steps to improve coordination to counter terrorism was the establishment of a Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), but its logical extension into an integrated NCTC has not been formalised to date. The MAC was created out of existing resources without

any additional accretions and is not fully effective because of shortages of resources and personnel. Part of the reason for these deficiencies and delays in implementation are internecine turf battles between various government bureaucracies competing for control of the proposed centre.

The NCTC proposed as a model for India is based on the American system, which Mr Chidambaram had the opportunity to examine during his four-day visit to the US in September 2009. Much of the organisational and legislative infrastructure required to establish NCTC already exists in India within the MAC, which can be expanded and redesigned as required. Internecine departmental rivalry amongst intelligence services regarding the sharing of information is a ground-level obstruction in India as also in other countries but if NCTC is to succeed what really requires to be firmly overcome is the prevalent mindset of reluctance towards constructive mutual cooperation. The NCTC in the United States was created in May 2003 in the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. In India, the trigger event was the terrorist attack on Mumbai on November 26, 2008 by sea-borne terrorists from Pakistan.

The attacks resulted in 164 Indian citizens killed and upwards of 308 injured. In the aftermath of the attack, the Maharashtra state government instituted a committee of inquiry under Ram Pradhan, a former Union home secretary. The report drew attention to inter-agency lapses very similar to those experienced by Americans during and after the 9/11 attacks.

The Union Government of India on 3 February 2012 notified the setting up of the anti-terror body called National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC). NCTC will have the power to carry out operations including arrest, search and seizure. It will draw its functional power of search and seizures under the provisions of the UAPA (Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. It will work as an integral part of Intelligence bureau. The notification mandates the terror-fighting agencies to share their inputs with NCTC and it also appoints the director and his core team. Director of NCTC will have full functional autonomy and he will havethe power to seek information on terror from National Investigation Agency, NATGRID, intelligence units of CBI, National Technical Research Organisation and directorate of revenue intelligence in addition to all seven central armed police forces including NSG. He will report to the IB chief and the home ministry. The notification was issued under the Article 73 of the Constitution of India.

National Counter Terrorism Centre of India is an ambitious project that aims at fighting the growing menace of terrorism in India. However, from the very beginning it is in doldrums. Fears of it becoming an all powerful and centralised point for terrorism related issues have never

allowed it to take a start. Besides there are many "practical difficulties" that may prevent the actual implementation of the much needed NCTC of India. Presently intelligence agencies of India are operating under different Department/Ministries and there would be a "reluctance" to submit to the centralised NCTC of India. Another problem pertaining to intelligence agencies of India in general and projects like NCTC, National Intelligence Grid (Natgrid) Project of India, etc in particular is that in India we have no "parliamentary oversight" over intelligence and law enforcement agencies. In this background, it has now been reported that the proposed NCTC of India may not be an umbrella organisation having control over various arms of intelligence agencies in India.

The "Safest and Easiest Method" to establish NCTC is to give a Parliamentary Scrutiny to Intelligence Agencies and their functioning. In the same Legal Framework, establishment and role of NCTC can be formulated, suggests Praveen Dalal. It seems P Chidambaram cannot proceed further due to administrative and bureaucratic problems but if Parliament of India enacts suitable laws in this regard, much of the problems can be solved. India has plethora of intelligence agencies and security agencies. These include Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Aviation Research Centre (ARC), Intelligence Bureau (IB), National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA), etc. Presently, intelligence agencies of India are operating in a decentralised manner. There is no centralised authority or Ministry that can coordinate or collaborate between different intelligence agencies. Further, there is no Parliamentary oversight of these intelligence agencies as well.

However, "Practical Difficulties" may prevent the actual implementation of the much needed NCTC of India, says Praveen Dalal, a Supreme Court lawyer and leading techno legal expert of India. He says that presently Intelligence Agencies of India are operating under different Department/Ministries and there would be a "Reluctance" to submit to the Centralised NCTC of India.

NCTC draws its powers from Article 73 of the Constitution whose clause a) notes that the executive power of the Union government shall extend 'to the matters with respect to which Parliament has power to make the laws'. NCTC Will integrate all intelligence pertaining to terrorism & will analyse the information, mount an effective response to terrorism. NCTC should be an independent organisation and not under the IB, as it is currently envisioned. From Article 73 also has a section b) which says "the executive power referred to in sub-clause (a) shall not, save as expressly provided in this Constitution or in any law made by Parliament, extend in any state to matters with respect to which the Legislature of the state has also power to make laws. The Constitution is clear that law and order is a state subject. NCTC's mission of integrating all information relating to terrorism also clashes with the work of the Research & Analysis Wing,

India's external intelligence agency, which is the nodal agency for intelligence on terror generated abroad. It will also clash with the mandate of the NTRO, which is tasked to collect and analyse information relating to national security, which includes terrorism. In its task of 'responding to terrorism' it will also clash with the National Investigation Agency which has been mandated to investigate and prosecute terrorism-related cases Most importantly, the NCTC which claims to derive its powers from the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967, functions under the Intelligence Bureau (IB) which has no legislative authority since it was set up by a government order.

It was proposed that the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), set up by the group of ministers report of 2002 to fuse intelligence on terrorism from a variety of sources, become the core of the new NCTC. But where the MAC was confined to intelligence gathering and analysis, the NCTC will have investigation and operations functions as well. Even more ambitious was the move, as enunciated by Union home minister P. Chidambaram in a speech at the Intelligence Bureau centenary endowment lecture in December 2009, to place institutions like the National Investigation Agency, the National Technical Research Office (NTRO), the National Crime Records Bureau, the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems and the National Security Guards under the NCTC; and have the counter-terror work of the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), the Aviation Research Centre and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), too under this organisation.

This note deals with the genesis, objectives, structure and powers of the proposed NCTC. A Group of Ministers (2001) that reviewed the internal security system in the aftermath of the Kargil conflict had recommended establishment of a Multi Agency Centre (MAC), a permanent Joint Task Force on Intelligence (JTFI) and an Inter State Intelligence Support System (INSIST). The recommendations were broadly accepted by the then Government. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (8th Report, 2008) had recommended that the Multi Agency Centre should be converted into a National Centre for Counter Terrorism with personnel drawn from different intelligence and security agencies.

Reference has been made to section 43A. That section enables the Central government to empower any officer of the Designated Authority under certain circumstances. The circumstances are that the officer knows that a person has committed an offence under UA(P)A or knows of a design by a person to commit any offence under UA(P)A. In those circumstances alone, the officer would have the power to arrest and the power to search. However, section 43A has to be read along with section 43B and in particular sub-sections (2) and (3) of section 43B which read as follows: "(2) Every person arrested and article seized under section 43A shall be forwarded without unnecessary delay to the officer in charge of the nearest police station. (3)

The authority or officer to whom any person or article is forwarded under sub-section (2) shall, with all convenient dispatch, take such measures as may be necessary in accordance with the provisions of the Code."

Until now, there was no appropriate body which could be specified as the "Designated Authority" under section 2(e) or upon which powers could be conferred under section 43A. When the Cabinet Committee on Security approved the setting up of NCTC, it also decided that the Director, NCTC may be specified as the "Designated Authority" and the officers of the Operations division of the NCTC may be given the powers under section 43A. A body mandated to deal with counter terrorism must have, in certain circumstances, an operational capability. This is true of all counter terrorism bodies in the world. When engaged in counter terrorism operations, the officers must have the power to arrest and the power to search which are the bare minimum powers that would be necessary. Besides, the powers conferred under section 43A must be read with the duty under section 43B to produce the person or article without unnecessary delay before the nearest police station (which will be under the State government), and the SHO of the Police Station will take further action in accordance with the provisions of the CrPC.

National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) of India is presently facing stiff oppositions. A majority of them are self created problems but some of them are also arising due to practical difficulties and internal turf war. The net result is that the obvious but unsolvable terrorism dilemma in India still continues. NCTC, like other governmental projects, is not supported by any legal framework. This is the most inappropriate step taken by the Indian government in general and home ministry in particular. While the constitutionality of the National Investigation Agency Act 2008 (NIAA 2008) is still doubtful yet NCTC without a legal framework is definitely unconstitutional.

By tagging it with the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 this unconstitutionality is not cured. Add to this the list of other projects of home ministry like National Intelligence Grid (Natgrid) and other similar projects by other ministries like Aadhar project. None of these projects are supported by a legal framework of any kind and they are just pure executive orders violating the constitutional provisions. The NCTC Project of India is also "very significant" for the national security of India.

Terrorist attacks against India are on increase and we need a "specilaised institution" like NCTC to provide and analyse valuable intelligence inputs and leads. However, the inadequacies and unconstitutionalities of NCTC project is proving costly and major hurdle for the successful implementation of the same.

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Topic: Relevance of BRICS

The BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) idea was first conceived in 2001 by Goldman Sachs as part of an economic modeling exercise to forecast global economic trends over the next half century; the acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper No. 66, "The World Needs Better Economic BRICs". BRIC Foreign Ministers at their meeting in New York on 21st September 2010 agreed that South Africa may be invited to join BRIC. Accordingly, China, as the host of 3rd BRICS Summit, invited South African President to attend the Summit in Sanya on 14 April 2011 with the concurrence of other BRIC Leaders. The BRICS countries - originally Brazil, Russia, India, and China, and now South Africa - have turned out to be a source of global economic development and essential to future generations. The center of global economic activity is shifting from industrialized nations in the west to emerging economies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. South Africa joined BRIC at the end of 2010. And Indonesia should be included in BRICS to represent the large developing countries that are increasingly central to global production and consumption.

BRICS is used in economics to refer to the combination of Brazil, Russia, India, and China & South Africa which make up over 48% of the world's population. These nations are going to play a major role in the future of global economy. In 2000, the four countries in BRIC (along with Indonesia), contributed just 18 percent of global GDP, while industrialized nations contributed about 65 percent. By 2010, BRIC countries provided more than a quarter of the world's GDP, at 27 percent. The rich countries' share had shrunk to 56 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, BRIC's GDP grew by an incredible 92.7 percent, compared to a global GDP growth of just 32 percent, with industrialized economies having a very modest 15.5 percent. The rising importance of BRICS economies can be seen in the growth of imports. Their import and service demands, at over $2 trillion, accounts for 13.5 percent of global imports, up from just 6 percent 10 years ago. This represents a 277 percent growth in imports. Global growth of imports during the same period was just 92 percent, while imports in industrialized economies grew only 72.3 percent.

BRICS countries have also diversified their source of imports and are trading more with other large emerging economies and developing countries. They play an important role in the global economy, and their role in the future of global economics seems more evident. In the area of new businesses, the market capitalization of BRIC companies grew from $1.2 trillion to $6.4 trillion between 2000 and 2010, a massive 641 percent increase. Their companies now account for over 18 percent of global market capitalization, up from a very modest 3.8 percent in 2000. If this trend continues, by 2025, BRICS companies will account for more than half of global market capitalization. Demographic shifts are taking place and BRICS states, especially India and

China, will have much of the world's youth, a driving force behind growth of consumer spending and innovation.

Their large domestic markets will create economies of scale that make BRICS' geographies central to global production and demand. And they will emerge as centers of innovation and new product development. India-China ties have undergone a significant change in the last two decades: They are broader and with more substance. A key element of that is the economy. China has gone from insignificant player to India's largest trade partner with, $62 billion of goods traded in 2010. Indian manufacturing and IT companies are making serious moves in China, and demonstrating their ability in high-tech engineering, software development, banking and foreign exchange trading.

BRICS countries will need to work together closely to evolve strategies for the future. This could include cooperation in a wide variety of issues like energy, food security, access to natural resources, climate change, global governance, and international trade policies. What is essential to maintaining this wide-ranging cooperation is for BRIC countries to have a stake in each other's economy. And increasing trade and business relations among them is a major part of that.

The Fourth BRICS summit was held in New Delhi on 29 March 2012. The theme of the summit was BRICS partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity. The summit was participated by India, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa. At the end of the summit, Delhi Declaration was issued. Development banks of BRICS signed two agreements- i) Master agreement on extending credit facility in local currency. ii) BRICS Multilateral letter of credit confirmation facility agreement. The five participating banks are Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social- BNDES, Brazil; State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs-Vnesheconombank of Russia; Export-Import bank of India; China Development Bank Corporation, and Development Bank of Southern Africa. These two agreements are expected to enhance cooperation among the BRICS development banks and to significantly promote intra-BRICS trade.

Highlights of Delhi Declaration

• BRICS nations agreed on the reform of IMF and world bank.
• Brazil, India, China and South Africa congratulated the Russian Federation on its accession to the WTO.
• BRICS nation said they were committed to playing their part in the global fight against climate change and will contribute to the global effort in dealing with climate change issues.

In the New Delhi summit, leaders of the BRICS group [Thursday, 29 March 2012] pressed Western powers to cede more voting rights at the IMF this year and flayed the rich world's reflationary monetary policies for putting global economic stability in jeopardy. Promised changes to voting rights at the IMF have yet to be ratified by the United States, adding to frustration over reform of the G7 and the U.N. Security Council, where India and Brazil have been angling for years for permanent seats. The BRICS leaders also accused rich countries of destabilizing the world economy five years into the global financial crisis by creating excessive global liquidity. It also recognised the right of Iran to pursue peaceful nuclear energy. They said that the crises over Iran's nuclear programme should be resolved diplomatically and should not be allowed to escalate.

China hopes the summit will continue to display the BRICS spirit of unity and win-win partnership, continue to enhance coordination and cooperation on global economy, finance, development and other major issues of common interest, push forward practical cooperation in various fields, send a joint message of confidence for world economic stability and recovery, provide impetus for improved global economic governance and make a contribution to common development in the whole world. We also hope the summit will help strengthen institutional building of BRICS cooperation, map out plans for the future, and lay a solid foundation for the long-term growth of BRICS cooperation. Currently, a large number of emerging markets and developing countries have achieved rapid economic growth and become an important force in promoting world peace and common development. Firmly committing to the path of peaceful development, cooperative development and harmonious development, these countries form an important part of common development of the world, which is conducive to a more balanced world economy, more reasonable international relations, more effective global governance and more durable world peace.

Since the outbreak of the international financial crisis in 2008, these countries have spearheaded the global recovery through their own development. The steady increase of their representation and the greater say they acquired in global economic governance have moved the international order in the direction of greater fairness and rationality. What has happened testifies once again that without the rise of emerging markets and developing countries, there will be no universal prosperity in the world; and that without the stability of these countries, there will be no world peace and stability. The development of these countries has a constructive impact on the international landscape. The international community should look at these countries from a long-term and strategic perspective and actively support their development.

BRICS countries are the defender and promoter of the interests of developing countries. In their cooperation, BRICS countries have committed to promoting South-South cooperation and North-

South dialogue, endeavoured to implement the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, worked for early realisation of the goals set out in the mandate for the Doha development round negotiations, strived to secure a greater say for developing countries in global economic governance and fought all forms of protectionism. Cooperation among BRICS countries is made necessary by the ongoing economic globalisation and democratisation in international relations. It is consistent with the trend of the times characterised by peace, development and cooperation, and fully conducive to building a harmonious world of durable peace and common prosperity.

As for BRICS practical cooperation in the near future, China wants to see efforts made in the following two areas: First, building a solid foundation. We should beef up the existing cooperation programmes in the spirit of practicality and efficiency and build a number of flagship projects. Second, being innovative. We should properly explore new areas of cooperation in light of the needs of economic and social development in BRICS countries, tap the cooperation potential and inject new vitality into the mechanism of BRICS cooperation.

Topic: Responsibility of media in a democracy

In a democratic setup Media occupies the most vital position and forms the very bedrock of democracy without which democracy is an aimless, futile exercise and never fulfill the aspirations of the people in real terms. The role of media in a democracy is as crucial as that of the politicians and should never be underestimated. To bring out before the public nothing but the truth in all matters without twisting the facts and should never be afraid of anyone except God is the first and foremost job of the media. If a democracy is to run smoothly in any country, it is a must that the media in all fairness should be given full autonomy and a free hand it deserves in airing its views among the people and no unnecessary restrictions should be imposed on it. The media also on its part should play a very responsible, active and neutral role in discharging its duties without being influenced by any particular political party or few individuals and should treat everyone on a equal footing.

The word ‘democracy’ is derived from the Greek word ‘demos- meaning - people and ‘cracy’ which means—rule. Thus democracy literally signifies ‘the rule of the people’. In Abraham Lincoln’s famous word-”democracy is the government of the people, for the people and by the people”. So democracy as a form of government implies that the ultimate authority of government is vested in the common people, that public policy is made to conform to the will of the people and to serve the interests of the people. Today we have indirect or representative democracy where government is conducted by the representatives of the people, who are elected at regular intervals through elections.

Effective democracy requires principles and working institutions. The institutions of democracy are said to be basically six in number. They are legislature, elected at regular intervals by adult universal suffrage. There must be political parties with coherent policies and capable alone, or in conjunction with other parties for carrying out a consistent policy and programmes for the peoples all round development and not only those who may have voted for them. There must be an executive, staffed with civil servants who are politically neutral. There must be independent legal system and lastly there must be a free media both print and electronic. No democracy can succeed without a strong and effective opposition. Strong opposition exercise a healthy restraint on the ruling party and prevents it from subjecting the people to arbitrary and despotic rule, sometimes the media acts like an opposition in the absence of strong opposition in a country.

Underlying principle of democracy is freedom i.e. freedom of speech and expression, freedom of movement etc. From these fundamental freecel11s arise the freedom of mass media and communication. Democracy provides ample freedom for mass media which includes print and electronic- media and now a new dimension which is added it that of internet. India is one of the largest participatory democracy and at the same time having a powerful mass media. Media plays a crucial role in effective working of democracy. It is the sole means through which public opinion is generated. It is regarded as fourth estate in the effective working of parliamentary democracy. Since media enjoys considerable power, there of course arises the question of responsibility because every power has its corresponding- responsibilities, limitations and accountability. As Sir Acton has rightly said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Especially in a democracy where media enjoys sufficient freedom, responsibility become- all most important.

Democracy rules out the use of force. It is based on the recognition of the worth of man as man, implying widest possible opportunity of development of everyone. Since no two human beings can ever think alike, it is natural to come across dissenting opinions at every step, in every field. True democratic spirit lies in overcoming dissent through discussion and persuasion and not through coercion. In a democracy, views are not imposed, views are shaped and moulded. Democracy inculcates among the people the habit of tolerance and compromise and teaches them to show due regard for the opinions and sentiments others. The media gives a platform for this divergent view’s which filters and then a commonly acceptable opinion or view emerges.

It plays an important role to uphold the principles of sovereignty, secularism, equality, rule of law, justice which is enshrined in our constitution. Important issues of local, national and international affairs are discussed and debated by the media. It provides information of multi Carious types be it news, reviews, literature, art, culture, business, films, entertainment, religion,

law, society etc. We are living in globalised world where key to know the world is information and information, not just generated within the country but anywhere in the world, with the emergence of knowledge based societies and world economies being so interlinked' with one another any event happening in one part can have inpact on the world's economy hence a greater dependence on mass media to keep individual and countries connected to the world.

Democracy presumes social equality. Disparities in wealth are a great threat to democracy. A country in which a large number of people remain in abject poverty while a handful of them have plenty to spare cannot run efficient democratic institutions. Similarly communalism, regionalism, caste and class distinctions can wreck a democracy. If a democratic government does not eliminate social distinctions and provide equal opportunities to all, it is bound to be overthrown sooner or later. The media high lights these disparities and petty distinctions amongst the citizen, thereby help in minimising their ill effects.

Democracy also requires not merely an absence of ignorance but also that the citizens are adequately educated. If knowledge remains scanty, fragmentary and confined to narrow circles and if the mass of humanity remains steeped in ignorance and error, there can be no prospects for the success of democracy. What is needed is to bring scientific knowledge to the doors of all, to universalise culture, to train the mind and to create the scientific temper. Education makes citizens vigilant and also gives them the boldness to criticize government measures which are ill-conceived or harmful. In fact, education produces wise leadership and an enlightened and alert public. Here again the media helps in the spead of knowledge and information to the people.

The opinion of the people regarding the working of the government as well as their reaction to government policies is crucial to the success or failure of a government in a democracy. Therefore, no government can ignore the opinion of the people who bring it to power. Public opinion keeps a check on the government and helps it in determining its policies.

If media does not discharge its responsibility independently in any democratic country, the politicians are bound to behave like dictations or even worse than them. As Benito Mussolini had once rightly said, "Democracy is a kingless regime infested by many kings who are sometimes more exclusive, tyrannical and destructive than one, if he be a tyrant". It is the fear of being exposed by the media before the public that most of the politicians keep themselves under control to some extent. Media has a very big role to play in a democracy and its stature is in no way less than that of politicians. Hence it is rightly called the fourth Pillar of democracy i.e. Fourth Estate. It is through media that people become aware of so many aspects of life of which they are normally ignorant. Democracy is meaningless without a free, neutral and active media. So media carries with it a huge responsibility in a democratic setup which it has to fulfill very carefully without any bias toward anyone by bringing out the real facts before the public.

The media must be free under any circumstances of a democracy is to function smoothly but certainly this freedom should not be misused by it at the cost of the people. The media can be free only if it dares to differ with the Government on such issue on which it strongly feels that Government has taken a wrong stand rather than singing and praising always the stand taken by the Government. The media should no doubt always show us nothing but the very truth. At the same time it should also care for the sentiments of the people and should take extra precautions to ensure that the news given by it does not create panic among the people or increase the communal tensions. There is no doubt that media has done a commendable job from time to time in making people aware about the harsh realities of life, in exposing corruption prevalent in our society, in increasing the awareness level among the people and a lot more but I feel that still a lot remains to be done.

Media is becoming increasingly popular among people from all walks of life and it certainly has the potential of influencing the thoughts of its readers/Viewers to a large extent. Media Should, no doubt, be neutral in airing views but it should also strongly desist from airing such views which can adversely affect the communal harmony and give rise to deep suspicion, tension and senseless violence which leads to killing innocent people. The media should make the people aware of the consequences of the various actions of the governments. It is the media which plays a major role in making a politician hero or Zero. So utmost neutrality is required on the part of media to observe and it must give publicity only to those politicians who are committed to the welfare of the poor and underprivileged and who really deserve it. It is the duty of the media to make sure that it is not partial towards any particular political party or an individual and gives free and fair opinion to the people without having any bias towards anyone.

It should never hesitate is unmasking before public the real faces of corrupt politicians and corrupt people without any fear and in disclosing corrupt practices prevalent in Government machinery but at the same time it should also bring before the pubic the good work done by the Government. If media is honest and committed in its job, democracy is bound to function more efficiently and the loopholes present in any democratic system can certainly be plugged to the fullest satisfaction of the people. On the contrary, if media is biased, corrupt and favours only a particular party or few individuals, it can prove to be very dangerous for the smooth functioning of democracy. No one can become perfect and one can only strive to become so. The same holds true for our media also. Certainly there is still a lot of scope for improvement by which the media can rise upon the aspirations of the people for which it is primarily meant.

Role of Print and Electronic Media

The print media which includes newspapers. periodicals and magazines, and the electronic media which includes radio and television and cinema help out greatly in the formation of public opinion. Newspapers are probable the most effective and commonly used means to influence the public opinion. News magazines and periodicals also help in forming public opinion by publishing articles on major national and international issues. The media acts as a kind of liaison between the government and the people. It acquaints the people with the policy and principles of the government. At the same time it reflects the public reaction to this policy and thus enables the government to modify it. Since the media gives such extensive publicity to the movements of the ministers and other higher ups, it exercises a very sobering influence on them. It does not let them forget that they are in office as the representatives of the people to whom they are finally answerable. Thus, it keeps a powerful check on the corruption and tyranny of the government. Perhaps the most important function of the media in a democratic government is to spread political awareness among the public. An average citizen has neither capability, nor the will, nor even the time to formulate and express original opinions on most of the issues. He seeks guidance from the newspaper magazines etc., he subscribes to. ‘t he observations he makes in the circle of his friends with flourish he has perhaps borrowed from that day’s editorial in his favourite newspaper or magazine. Thus the media has a definite educative value. The success of democracy depends upon the judicious use of one’s vote which is impossible without political education and the media is the most effective source available to us for this type of education. This place a great responsibility upon the editors, the correspondents and the professional reviewers of a newspaper to furnish us with authentic news and impartial views only.

Indian media shows a mosaic picture. Many of the issues discussed’ and shown on the news channel are not only irrelevant but are blown out of proportion. With emphasis on unnecessary issues, real issues generally get buried. News channels are generally driven by TRP’s rather than issues. They try to scandalize the issue to generate public curiosity. Instead of breaking news they are actually making news and then breaking it. The channels trivialize the issue and set bad precedence. It makes icons out of Rakhi Sawant and the likes .One of the channel shows regularly story of ‘Bhoot’ coming to village which reinforces superstition among people. Media is now being used by people to get instant attention from the public. Controversies are created every morning demolished the same evening just to make a new controversy next day. Under this whole hue and cry the real issues take back seat. Same is the case with the print media many of the newspapers carry the most irrelevant news on their front page. Yellow journalism has become the order of day. This has given rise to new culture of Page3 journalism which exclusively covers the elite parties and thoroughly discusses them the next day. Media houses generally absolves of their responsibility by saying that they show what people want. But

actually it is the media that first set the trends create demands and people fell prey to it. A line need to be drawn somewhere.

Well there is other side of the coin. There are few responsible news channels and newspapers, how so ever, their numbers are limited. They do reflect what is called as meaningful journalism. They cover issues of public importance generating awareness among people at the same time bringing to states's notice various issues of concern. Journalism can play important role I to curb social evils and find solutions to problems. Many newspapers ignore. Issues pertaining to rural India like poverty, lack of education, health services etc. Covering such issues can bring fundamental change as this would bring fourth common concern not from government machinery but from citizens of civil society at large. There are stories of some news channel where their effective intervention into a issue has brought government machinery to act. The recent initiative by a news channel in Jessica Lal murder case actually made the court to reseek the issue and change the decision. Similarly issues concerning needs of common citizens like bad infrastructure, corruption, government apathy can be brought to light by the media. Media has also created greater concern among citizens on' issues concerning justice, human rights violation, social evils etc.

Working of democracy lies on the premise of electing representatives and how free and fair these elections are. Come elections media frenzy grabs the whole country. Media coverage has brought greater awareness among people about the respective candidates from their constituency. Earlier municipal/district elections went just unnoticed but now due to local newspapers and local news channels it generates lot of public participation. Another dimension that is added to media is the internet though it is not as far reaching as the other ones yet it has emerged as new platform especially in the globalised world. The novel idea of blogs and websites like 'You Tube' which provides freedom to individual to upload video clippings, news etc or to start forms to debate on. Any issue has brought greater power in the hands of an individual to share and present their views on global forum. Yet this unfettered power sometimes creates malaise and hurt public sentiments.

The Credibility and Objectivity of Media

The credibility and objectivity of media coverage of the communal disturbances in Gujarat became the subject of sharp controversy in last year. While much of it centred on television coverage, the print media was also involved. However, after an investigation by a fact finding team appointed by the Editors Guild of India. it was absolved of the charge of biasness. It found that "prompt and extensive portrayal of the untold horrors visited on innocent people in the wake of the Godhra Carnage", and exposed "the supine if not complicity attitude of the State and

manifest out pourings of communal hatred stirred the conscience of the nation compelled remedial action...:' The Guild also found two local Gujarati papers guilty of provoking anti-Muslim feelings.

For the electronic media the issue about the ethics and excesses of television coverage were raised. And once again there was censorship on the national broadcaster. with the debate in Parliament on a censure motion in Gujarat not being aired live on Doordarshan. The media's coverage of the Gujarat assembly election totally went against their predictions, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Narendrabhai Modi won a two third majority though it was predicted that the BJP would not win the election or win it with thin majority.

Conclusion

All this put great responsibility on the media The media should report impartially on the events and happenings of the nation and not resort to bias reporting's and images, it democracy is to be successful in India. Since the media—both the print media and the electronic have so much responsibility in the functioning of democracy and to well being of the nation it follows that the media should be more responsible. There is very subtle line that decides what is good or bad, moral/immoral. Yet these are questions which are very crucial to journalism. Freedom of press does not connote that they can do anything in the name of freedom. This may have serious implications for the society and nation at large. It is said that during riots the fire may just occurs once but on news channels it occurs for 24 hrs. It is said that cure for evils of democracy is more democracy similarly cure for evils of media is not to curb its freedom but to make it more responsible.

Topic: Literacy is growing very fast but there is no corresponding growth in education.

After independence hot debate took place between Indian leaders on the issue of giving voting rights to people. Jawaharlal Nehru was of the view that only educated people should be given the voting rights, on the contrary Mahatma Gandhi was of the was the view that it is difficult to decide who is educated and who is not, since all literate person are not educated and all educated person may not be necessarily literate hence every adult Indian should be given voting rights. However after the death of Mahatma Gandhi there was no leader left who can draw the distinguishing line between literacy and Education. In the last 63 years after independence this two terms have been badly intermingled with each other. Even the government itself considers these two terms as synonyms of each other and therefore all the so called "Education Policies" of government are targeted to only increase literacy among people on the name of educating people.

Let’s discuss what the difference between literacy and Education is. Although I am neither an Educationist nor a scholar but on the basis of my limited understanding I can spell this differences.

- Literacy teaches us how to read and write and Education teaches us what to read and write.
- Literacy is fact oriented whereas Education is value oriented. For instance a literate person will talk about economic growth rate whereas an educated person will talk about economic growth with distributive justice.
- Literacy gives information whereas Education gives knowledge. The difference between information and knowledge is that information is technical or theoretical know how of any subject whereas knowledge is awareness about how, where, when and why to use that information. For instance a person having degree in physics might have vast information about atomic energy but it is true knowledge and Education which teaches a person that this information should be used for development of human kind and not for its destruction.
- Education brings all round development of human personality i.e. Physical, Psychological and Spiritual development whereas literacy rather than leading to development maintains status quo.
- Last but not least Education brings revolution in thinking. It inspires a person to think in unconventional but creative and innovative way. It brings curiosity and rationalism in the thought process. It liberates person from mental slavery of superstitions, bias, disbelieves and outdated rigid social and religious customs.

Now have a look on our present education system on the basis of these criteria and you will get the answer. Declining morality in public life, growing cases of scams, frauds and corruption, feeling of insensitivity among people towards national and social problems, negligence towards extra curriculum knowledge in youth, commercialization of schools, colleges and universities all points towards the failure of education system. Unfortunately we are living in the era where education has become necessity for all the wrong reasons. Whether educated or uneducated everyone agrees about the pivotal role of education in modern day human life. Even our always late responding Government has also waked up and includes it in fundamental rights of the constitution.

But why suddenly education has become so much important for people of a country who has long tradition of treating Education as a patronage of few? Education is must because without education one can’t get degree, prestigious white collar job, good bride or groom, status and wealth. People usually give these kinds of answers. I know that all the above mentioned things

are also important in life and it's even better that educated person gets prestige, wealth, social recognition, power etc. Because he knows the value of these things and he is least likely to misuse it, but all these things should be seen like a byproduct of education and not a sole objective of education. When I emphasize on the role of values in education I does not intend to convert education in a factory of mass production of defeated philosophers who have thousands of theories for every problem but no practical solution for any of them.

But can we dare to aspire to become superpower or a developed nation with this kind of education system. Don't forget that this Education system was established by Lord Macaulay to produce clerks to run their administration. so how can we expect from this education system to produce genius scientists, noble statesman, medal winner sports person and the most important a good citizen for a growing nation which was bonded in the chains of slavery for centuries. Tell me how many Indians have won noble prize after Independence? Don't give me the name of Venkatraman Ramkrishnan (who won chemistry Noble prize last year) or V.S Naipaul or DR.Hargovind Khorana because all of them got this award while staying away from India. Now just glance through the list of American, Japanese and European Noble winners and then think for a while where we stand on the world map. Similar situation prevails on the front of Booker prize, Pulitzer Prize, Magsaysay award, Oscar award and any other internationally reputed award.

Since last five years no Indian University is included in the list of top 200 Universities of world. Last year India had just managed to register 28,000 Patents whereas China whom we dream to compete had registered more than 200,000 patents. While we are feeling proud of coming 2nd in Commonwealth games in which participants were mostly from third world countries who were previously colonies of England, we simply forget that Australia who came 1st is a country of less than 1% population of India won almost double medals than us and When it comes to tough competition like Asian games and Olympics we have hardly won few handful of medals in half a century. On the name of Education we are just producing cyber coolies who for the sake of their so called luxurious life style (Pizzas, Burger, Coke, Pepsi, Shopping in Mall, watching films in Multiplex and dance in discotheque is a definition of luxurious life style for our so called Educated youth) are ready to sell or mortgage themselves to Multinational Corporations and call centers. Slavery is back in new form, few centuries ago European and American Masters used to import slaves from Asian and African Markets now rather than importing slaves they export their work to these modern slaves, which is known as outsourcing now days.

In last 63 years we have heard and seen various reforms but what about desperately needed Education reform? whenever education reforms are talked about we only here about shifting to grade system from marks system, open books exams, exams by choice, virtual classrooms,

introduction of optional subjects etc. What about injecting curiosity in the children which inspires a person to achieve the knowledge. Million saw Apple falling, but only Newton asked why because he had curiosity to know the things. Can these silly changes teach those values to our young generation of which we are facing severe crisis? Can these changes cultivate scientific temper in people who are still killing girls in fetus, killing young boys and girls on the name of Gotra and Religion? Are these steps potent enough to bring reforms which we desperately need in our education system? Or are they just like a plastic paint on a hollow wall. The answer is certainly "NO". We want thorough reforms and not few cuts and carves here and there, we want change from within.

But the million dollar question is that who will bring this change? Our leaders who are busy in playing vote bank politics, washing each other's dirty linen in public, honoring themselves with garlands made up of currency notes and performing outdated political stunts like taking dinner in a Dalit's hut or people of this great country who have even more important works like gossiping about anything, praying for Sachin Tendulkars century, burning candles after every terrorist attack, watching repeated telecast of TV shows and playing cards in local train? There are many such questions which needs to be answered on a war footing but we are busy because Olympics is coming and we have so many responsibilities like discussing why this & why that.

Topic: Child Labour-free India: Myth or Reality

Children have always been taken for granted although reams of documents have been churned out by international and national agencies trying to better the child's tomorrow. Despite all the words written, promises made and conventions signed, too little has changed. A good proportion of children throughout the world, especially in India, form a part of the toiling massesdestitute, deprived and disadvantaged. Millions of them work in fields and factories, on street corners and in garbage dumpy: in private houses and in 'public' houses. Most do some work from their earliest years, helping around the home or running errands. With a low level of education and rundown sense of social responsibility, such children can do much harm to society if they are not given equal protection and opportunities to develop to the best of their potential. The existence of child labour in India is a complex reality, a social crime, a crime against humanity. It is a symptom, however; not the disease. It is but natural that one may be tempted to ask why the problem still exists.

Poverty is the principal and parent cause for the prevalence and persistence of child labour. Large number of dependent children, parental illiteracy, unstable and poor income, and few income-generating assets are the more likely reasons for children ending up working rather than studying. Some studies reveal higher incidence of child labour in poor single-parent families.

However, many children work not entirely because of poverty but because of pressure from parents who themselves sit idle or demand extra income to satisfy their various addictions. Ineffective laws and, more often, lack of political will to implement them also contribute to the problem. The inspection machinery is not efficient and in many cases the parents are reluctant to support the relevant programmes of the government because of their socio-economic compulsions. Child labour is preferred by many employers mainly because it is cheap, and comes without much of a liability. Sometimes, the parents also offer their children to work for an employer in lieu of a loan or debt.

The constitutional vision of 'universal' and 'compulsory' education for all children up to the age of 14 is till today an illusory mirage. Parents consider it prudent to send their non-school-going children to work and earn. The principle of 'spare the rod, spoil the child' being largely followed by school teachers, repulsive methods of teaching and many social discriminations at village schools-if indeed, school facilities exist at all-result in a great number of drop-outs; these are naturally pushed into the labour market, rural or urban. Lastly, the increasing industrialisation and urbanisation and soaring materialistic aspirations have also a say in this respect.

The phenomenon of child labour is not, however, new or recent. Even a long time back, children were being sold and purchased as slaves of the rich. Poor children were also employed in well-to-do houses. Generally, parents would involve their children in their own professions. In the Gurukul system of education, the students were asked to perform various tasks for their teachers like begging for food. Collecting fuel and milking cows, though it was all a vital part of their learning. Exploitation of children at work or making them work at the expense of education has always attracted the flak of sensible people. According to Manusmriti and Arthashastra the king was to make education of every child compulsory. Despite that, children would do some work either at home or in thefield along with their parents. Kautilya prohibited the sale and purchase of children.

Child labour in its present form made its appearance around the mid-19th century when modern industries were introduced in India by the British. Disintegration of indigenous self-sufficient village economies, and subsequent scarcity of food and soaring prices compelled the villagers to migrate to the new industrial centres for livelihood. The employers found children more sincere and easier to bully into harder work than their elders; they could also be paid less. The magnitude of child labour gradually began to grow, especially in deep mines, factories and plantations. Simultaneously, their conditions of work became more inhuman, more pathetic. Many philanthropists began to denounce the modus operandi of employers and the exploitation and abuse of children. This resulted in the First Factory Act (1881) which laid down that children

between the ages of 7 and 12, years could not be made to work for more than nine hours a day. (Today the hours seem astoundingly hard!) Since then, several constitutional and administrative measures have been taken at international and national levels to ameliorate the conditions of child labour and to ultimately eradicate it. Both the Indian Constitution and the International Labour Organisation believe that a human child should be given opportunities to enjoy the pleasures of learning and play at least till he or she completes 14 Years of age. But these remain utopian wishes.

Millions of children in today's world undergo the worst forms of child labor which includes Child Slavery, Child prostitution, Child Trafficking, Child Soldiers. In modern era of material and technological advancement, children in almost every country are being callously exploited. The official figure of child laborers worldwide is 13 million. But the actual number is much higher. Of the estimated 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 who are economically active, some 50 million to 60 million between the ages of 5 and 11 are engaged in intolerable forms of labor. Among the 10 to 14year-old children the working rate is 41.3 percent in Kenya, 31.4 percent in Senegal, 30.1 percent in Bangladesh, 25.8 percent in Nigeria, 24 percent in Turkey, 17.7 percent in Pakistan, 16.1 percent in Brazil, 14.4 percent in India, 11.6 percent in China.

ILO estimated that 250 million children between 5 and 14 work for a living, and over 50 million children under age twelve work in hazardous circumstances. United Nations estimate that there were 20 million bonded child laborers worldwide. Based on reliable estimates, at least 700,000 persons to 2 million, especially girls and children, are trafficked each year across international borders. Research suggests that the age of the children involved is decreasing. Most are poor children between the ages of 13 and 18, although there is evidence that very young children even babies, are also caught up in this horrific trade. They come from all parts of the world. Some one million children enter the sex trade, exploited by people or circumstances. At any one time, more than 300,000 children under 18 - girls and boys - are fighting as soldiers with government armed forces and armed opposition groups in more than 30 countries worldwide. ILO estimates that domestic work is the largest employment category of girls under age 16 in the world.

Children are employed in agriculture, fishing, hunting, plantation, manufacturing, maintenance, construction and transport industries, trade and other services. The main pockets of child labour concentration in India are bidi manufacturing centres, restaurants and dhabos, lock-mak. ing, carpet industry, match and fireworks factories, precious stones polishing centres, glass and brassware industries, bangles and hosiery manufacturing centres, and in almost all the tribal areas. Very often one comes across the pathetic sight of children rummaging garbage dumps for rags, paper and plastic pieces. Small children are engaged in various activities like petty vending,

shoe-shining and selling newspapers at dangerous road crossings. The abodes of most of them are either the streets and pavements, railway platforms, or squalid and unhygienic slums.

India has more child workers than any other country and the incidence is on the increase. According to the Asian Labour Monitor, every third household in India has a working child, every fourth child in the age-group of 5-15 is employed and over twenty per cent of the country's GNP is the contribution of child labour. According to one estimate, there are more than one crore working children in the age-group of 10-14 as compared to the total child population of 25 crore. Such children are denied opportunities for growth, development, learning, health care, recreation and deprived of much-needed love. They are forced instead to step into the world of adult work with child wages. They are the only kind of workers who have no representatives of their own in legislatures, who have no union, hence no unrest, no demands for better facilities or wage-hike. As a result, they are the most low-paid and uncared-for workers in the labour market, Hard long hours of labour thwarts the children's world of imagination, and kills their creativity by thrusting them into a mechanised way of life. It chokes their mental and physical growth. The result is disastrous. Soon, they start suffering from asthma, tuberculosis, rupture of ear-drums, skin diseases: they may even lose a limb or taro while working. Some child workers start taking country liquor and drugs to ward off exhaustion. Their disturhed childhood also drives some to crime. Many of them fall victim to sexual abuse, and many are thrust into prostitution. The whole system, the inequitable socio-economic-political ambience, is responsible for the plight of children. They are being punished not for any fault of theirs but for that of their elders.

The legislative framework and policy perspectives on child lahour have, more or less, failed to mitigate the miseries of children. The programmes formulated for their betterment remain on paper for want of adequate funds and political will. Very little effort has been made to tackle the problem effectively. Neither parents nor employers have been penalised for exploiting children. Very few alternatives for vocationalising have been provided. Child labour is, however, embedded in the social milieu and economic compulsions of India. The problem is far more complex than the do-good foreigners, the do-better Indian activists and the do-nothing government realise. It can be solved neither by punishment nor by inducements alone. In a country fragmented by diversity of religious, cultural, social and ethnic backgrounds, it is imperative that the programmes cater to the felt needs of the people. This means that the process of change will be slow, and India will have to live with the problem for some time to come. In the interim, mitigation is all one can hope for, but here the efforts must be sincere and steady.

The West may salve its conscience by banning carpet imports from India because of the tender hands that have suffered in making them. But a practical thought must be spared for the plight of

the children if suddenly deprived of their livelihood. Crime, prostitution and destitution can hardly be a better fate than child labour.

Child labor is a source of income for poor families. They provide help in household enterprises or of household chores in order to free adult household members for economic activity elsewhere. In some cases, the study found that a child's income accounted for between 34 and 37 percent of the total household income. In India the emergence of child labor is also because of unsustainable systems of landholding in agricultural areas and caste system in the rural areas. Bonded labour refers to the phenomenon of children working in conditions of servitude in order to pay their debts. The debt that binds them to their employer is incurred not by the children themselves but by their parent. The creditors cum employers offer these loans to destitute parents in an effort to secure the labor of these children. The arrangements between the parents and contracting agents are usually informal and unwritten. The number of years required to pay off such a loan is indeterminate. The lower castes such as dalits and tribal make them vulnerable groups for exploitation.

The environmental degradation and lack of employment avenues in the rural areas also cause people to migrate to big cities. On arrival in overcrowded cities the disintegration of family units takes place through alcoholism, unemployment or disillusionment of better life etc. This in turn leads to emergence of street children and child workers who are forced by their circumstances to work from the early age. The girls are forced to work as sex -workers or beggars. A large number of girls end up working as domestic workers on low wages and unhealthy living conditions.

Sometimes children are abandoned by their parents or sold to factory owners. The last two decades have seen tremendous growth of export based industries and mass production factories utilizing low technologies. They try to maintain competitive positions through low wages and low labor standards. The child laborers exactly suit their requirements. They use all means to lure the parents into giving their children on pretext of providing education and good life. In India majority of children work in industries, such as cracker making, diamond polishing, glass, brass-ware, carpet weaving, bangle making, lock making and mica cutting to name a few. 15% of the 100,000 children work in the carpet industry of Uttar Pradesh. 70-80% of the 8,000 to 50,000 children work in the glass industry in Ferozabad. In the unorganized sector child labor is paid by piece-by-piece rates that result in even longer hours for very low pay.

Inadequate schools, a lack of schools, or even the expense of schooling leaves some children with little else to do but work. The attitudes of parents also contribute to child labor; some parents feel that children should work in order to develop skills useful in the job market, instead of taking advantage of a formal education. From the time of its independence, India has committed itself to be against child labor. Article 24 of the Indian constitution clearly states that

“No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or employed in any hazardous employment” The Bonded Labour System Act of 1976 fulfills the Indian Constitution’s directive of ending forced labour A Plethora of additional protective legislation has been put in place. There are distinct laws governing child labour in factories in commercial establishments, on plantations and in apprenticeships. There are laws governing the use of migrant labour and contract labour. A recent law The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation law) of 1986 designates a child as a person who has not completed their 14th year of age. It purports to regulate the hours and the conditions of child workers and to prohibit child workers in certain enumerated hazardous industries. However there is neither blanket prohibition on the use of child labour, nor any universal minimum age set for child workers. All of the policies that the Indian government has in place are in accordance with the Constitution of India, and all support the eradication of Child Labor. The problem of child labor still remains even though all of these policies are existent. Enforcement is the key aspect that is lacking in the government’s efforts.

Faced with such an alarming problem, we have to act swiftly. Though the abolition of child labour is the ultimate objective of any sane society, one cannot ignore the ground realities. At present, the thrust of effort is on amelioration of the conditions of child labour. The Indian government’s policy is to prohibit the employment of children in hazardous jobs and regulate their conditions of work in other occupations. The Constitution has made the protection of children below 14 years a guaranteed and enforceable fundamental right under Article 14-”no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or engaged in any other hazardous employment”. According to Article 39 (e), the tender age of children should not be abused and citizens should not be forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age and strength. Article 39 (f) states that children should he given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity so that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation.

And now the right to free and compulsory education till the age of 14 has been made a fundamental right. Various safeguards for child labourers have been provided in the Factories Act (1948), the Mines Act (1950), the Plantation Labour Act (1951) and other Acts. In 1974, India adopted a resolution on National Policy for Children. In 1975, the government introduced the Integrated Child Development Programme. The enactment of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986 has been the starting point of the government’s active intervention in this field. The second major initiative has been the formulation of the National Policy on Child Labour (1987). It aims at tackling the problem in a phased manner with a three-pronged strategy: I amending the legislation to give it more teeth and strengthening the mechanism for its stricter

enforcement; focusing on development programmes for the benefit of child labour; and initiating rehabilitation schemes for children withdrawn from employment and providing them education, health care and vocational training.

Constitutional provisions and legislations alone, however, cannot combat the menace unless these are supplemented by comprehensive socio-economic programmes and educational uplift, and total change in the social psyche and attitude. The government cannot be expected to achieve much on its own; it is essential to involve in the effort various voluntary organisations and the employers themselves who depend to a large extent on the child labour force. It would also be more purposeful to have a single ministry or department at the Centre to deal with the problems of children in place of the existing multiplicity of authority: that would optimise the operational coherence and all-round economy. A joint committee of Parliament can also be set up to constantly review the policies and programmes regarding child labour. A strong parliamentary pressure group on behalf of this unrepresented constituency will be an institutional catalyst. At the micro level, the working conditions of children can effectively he improved; holidays and medical help should be ensured. Atrocitiesboth mental and physical-perpetrated by employers should be detected and severely punished. And the debts of parents should not be visited on the heads of their children.

Child labor is a global problem. If child labour is to be eradicated, the governments and agencies and those responsible for enforcement need to start doing their jobs. The most important thing is to increase awareness and keep discussing ways and means to check this problem. We have to decide whether we are going to take up the problem head-on and fight it any way we can or leave it to the adults who might not be there when things go out of hand.

Topic: Poverty in India

According to a recent Indian government committee constituted to estimate poverty, nearly 38% of India’s population (380 million) is poor. This report is based on new methodology and the figure is 10% higher than the present poverty estimate of 28.5%. The committee was headed by SD Tendulkar has used a different methodology to reach at the current figure. It has taken into consideration indicators for heath, education, sanitation, nutrition and income as per National Sample Survey Organization survey of 2004-05. This new methodology is a complex scientific basis aimed at addressing the concern raised over the current poverty estimation.

Since 1972 poverty has been defined on basis of the money required to buy food worth 2100 calories in urban areas and 2400 calories in rural areas. In June this year a government committee headed by NC Saxena committee estimated 50% Indians were poor as against Planning Commission’s 2006 figure of 28.5%. Poverty is one of the main problems which have

attracted attention of sociologists and economists. It indicates a condition in which a person fails to maintain a living standard adequate for his physical and mental efficiency. It is a situation people want to escape. It gives rise to a feeling of a discrepancy between what one has and what one should have. The term poverty is a relative concept. It is very difficult to draw a demarcation line between affluence and poverty. According to Adam Smith - Man is rich or poor according to the degree in which he can afford to enjoy the necessaries, the conveniences and the amusements of human life.

Even after more than 50 years of Independence India still has the world's largest number of poor people in a single country. Of its nearly 1 billion inhabitants, an estimated 260.3 million are below the poverty line, of which 193.2 million are in the rural areas and 67.1 million are in urban areas. More than 75% of poor people reside in villages. Poverty level is not uniform across India. The poverty level is below 10% in states like Delhi, Goa, and Punjab etc whereas it is below 50% in Bihar (43) and Orissa (47). It is between 30-40% in Northeastern states of Assam, Tripura, and Mehgalaya and in Southern states of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Poverty has many dimensions changing from place to place and across time. There are two inter-related aspects of poverty - Urban and rural poverty. The main causes of urban poverty are predominantly due to impoverishment of rural peasantry that forces them to move out of villages to seek some subsistence living in the towns and cities. In this process, they even lose the open space or habitat they had in villages albeit without food and other basic amenities. When they come to the cities, they get access to some food though other sanitary facilities including clean water supply still elude them. And they have to stay in the habitats that place them under sub-human conditions. While a select few have standards of living comparable to the richest in the world, the majority fails to get two meals a day. The causes of rural poverty are manifold including inadequate and ineffective implementation of anti-poverty programmes.The overdependence on monsoon with non-availability of irrigational facilities often result in crop-failure and low agricultural productivity forcing farmers in the debt-traps. The rural communities tend to spend large percentage of annual earnings on social ceremonies like marriage; feast etc.Our economic development since Independence has been lopsided .There has been increase in unemployment creating poverty like situations for many. Population is growing at an alarming rate. The size of the Indian family is relatively bigger averaging at 4.2.The other causes include dominance of caste system which forces the individual to stick to the traditional and hereditary occupations.

Since the 1970s the Indian government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning. Policies have focused on improving the poor standard of living by ensuring food

security, promoting self-employment through greater access to assets, increasing wage employment and improving access to basic social services. Launched in 1965, India's Public Distribution System has helped meet people's basic food needs by providing rations at subsidized prices. Although it has affected less than 20% of the Poor's food purchases, the system has been important in sustaining people's consumption of cereals, especially in periods of drought. It has provided women and girls with better access to food and helped overcome the widespread discrimination against female consumption within households. It has also reduced the burden of women, who are responsible for providing food for the household. The largest credit-based government poverty reduction programme in the world, the Integrated Rural Development Programme provides rural households below the poverty line with credit to purchase income-generating assets. Launched in 1979, the programme has supplied subsidized credit to such groups as small and marginalized farmers, agricultural laborers, rural artisans, the physically handicapped, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Within this target population, 40% of the beneficiaries are supposed to be women. Although the programme has reached 51 million families, only 27% of the borrowers have been women. The programme has significantly increased the income of 57% of assisted families.

Rural poverty is largely a result of low productivity and unemployment. The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, a national public works scheme launched in 1989 with financing from the central and state governments, provides more than 700 million person days of work a year about 1% of total employment for people with few opportunities for employment. The scheme has two components: a programme to provide low-cost housing and one to supply free irrigation wells to poor and marginalized farmers. The public works scheme is self-targeting. Since it offers employment at the statutory minimum wage for unskilled manual labor, only those willing to accept very low wages the poor are likely to enroll in the scheme. By providing regular employment and thereby increasing the bargaining power of all rural workers, the public works scheme has had a significant effect in reducing poverty. It has also contributed to the construction of rural infrastructure (irrigation works, a soil conservation project, drinking water supply). Evaluations show that 82% of available funds have been channeled to community development projects. Targeting was improved in 1996 when the housing and irrigation well components were delinked and focused exclusively on people below the poverty line.

TRYSEM (Training rural youth for self employment) was started to provide technical skills to the rural youth and to help them to get employment in fields such as agriculture, industry, services and business activities. Youth of the poor families belonging to the age-group of 18-35 are entitled to avail the benefits of the scheme. Priority is given to persons belonging to ST/SC and ex-servicemen and about 1/3 seats are reserved for women. Minimum Needs Programme

was taken up as an integral part of the 5th Five Year Plan and it was intended to cater to the minimum needs of the people such as rural water supply, rural health, road building, adult education, primary education, rural electrification and improvement of the urban slums etc.With the intention of removing urban unemployment some schemes such as SEPUP (Self-employment programme for the urban poor); SEEUY (Scheme for self-employment of the educated urban youths) .These schemes gives loans and subsidies for the urban unemployed youths to create or to find for themselves some jobs. The SEPUP had provided financial help for about 1.19 urban unemployed youths in the year 190-91.

The participation of civil society organizations in poverty reduction efforts, especially those directed to women, has increased social awareness and encouraged governments to provide better services. Cooperatives such as the Self-Employed Women's Association provide credit to women at market rates of interest but do not require collateral; they also allow flexibility in the use of loans and the timing of repayments. These civil society organizations have not only contributed to women's material well being; they have also helped empower them socially and politically. Such credit initiatives, by bringing women out of the confines of the household, are changing their status within the family and within village hierarchies. The demands of civil society organizations for better social services have spurred the government to launch campaigns to increase literacy and improve public infrastructure. And their calls for greater accountability and real devolution of power are increasing the likelihood that expenditures for poverty reduction will reach the needy, especially women.

The Indian state has undoubtedly failed in its responsibilities towards its citizens over the last 50 odd years. There is a need for the state to move out of many areas and the process has been started with economic liberalization. The process of decentralization should devaluate lot more powers, both functional and financial, to panchayats. The lack of transparency and accountability has hampered our economic development at all levels. The problem of poverty persists because of a number of leakages in the system. New laws have to be evolved to ensure more accountability. Bodies like the Planning Commission should be modified into new constitutional bodies that can hold governments accountable for their failure to implement development programmes. A strong system of incentives and disincentives also needs to be introduced. The encouragement of non-governmental organizations and private sector individuals in tackling poverty is imperative, as the state cannot do everything.

The main causes of poverty are illiteracy, population growth rate by far exceeding the economic growth rate for the better part of the past 50 years, protectionist policies pursued since 1947 to 1991 which prevented large amounts of foreign investment in the country. Now the things have changed and with the globalisation and liberalisation of our economy we can expect a lot of

betterment in the direction of reducing the level of poverty further. Poverty alleviation is expected to make better progress in the next 50 years than in the past, as a trickle-down effect of the growing middle class. Increasing stress on education, reservation of seats in government jobs and the increasing empowerment of women and the economically weaker sections of society are also expected to contribute to the alleviation of poverty. Eradication of poverty is a very long-term goal in India. With the new government coming into power, having assured to boost the rural sector particularly, we hope that the poor of this great nation should see the bright path ahead.

Topic: Population of India

Nargis was born on October 31, 2011. The date was a landmark for India, for Nargis was not just another girl child but, officially, the 7 billionth member of the world. According to demographic projections, India's population may very soon overtake China's in numbers to gain the distinction perhaps, a dubious one-of being the country with the largest population in the world. Critics view the prospect of such a large population with horror. India's population is not just large but it is marked by a diversity not found elsewhere. At least six major religions of the world, besides other sects, have its followers in the country. Over the last several thousand years, Indian ethnic diversity has assumed such a complex intermingled state that it is almost impossible to differentiate various racial strains. The people speak a multiplicity of languages, and each one has a rich cultural history, literature and tradition of its own. This linguistic diversity poses the problem of how to provide education at the primary level and how to develop a national consensus on a link language for the entire country. It also makes it a challenging task to provide information on family planning to every section of the population.

Beyond all these differences, India also shows large economic diversity-in income shares, poverty levels, regional resources. India has three distinct faces-the reasonably well-off middle and upper middle class constituting about 20 per cent of the population; what could be called the lower middle class, people who have received some of the benefits of growth since independence and manage a level of living, if not comfortable, at least not desperate; the bottom 30 per cent or so of the population which lives in considerable poverty. The economic disparities inevitably being compounded by disparities in education and literacy problems in accelerating social development arise in many regions.

Population –The trends in India

- Growing India: India is the world's second most populous country and is expected to be the most populous by 2040.The country is undergoing the same forces of demographic transition that have been experienced elsewhere, only delayed by few decades.

- Young India: Over 700 million Indians are below 35 years of age and over 550 million are below 25.However despite its youthful population, India's size means that it is home to the second largest number of older people in the world, in absolute terms.
- Unequal India: The rising income gap is creating an urban-rural divide and a north-south imbalance. A quarter of India's population lives below the poverty line with most living off the land on small farms with little access to new technology.
- Urbanizing India: Almost 70% of Indians still reside in rural areas although in recent decades migration to larger cities has led to a dramatic increase in the country's urban population.
- Mega city India: India is home to around 18% of the world's population but accounts for only 2.42% of the total world area; the emergence of mega cities is inevitable.
- Aspirational India: The emerging middle class will surge tenfold; exceeding 500 million by 2025.It will command 60% of the country's spending power.

There is little doubt that the levels of growth in India's population put all kind of pressure on the economy. The material quality of life of the vast masses suffers. There may be a steady growth in GDP, but at least a third of that is neutralised by population growth. The net increase in the general quality of life is modest and given the skewed distribution of the benefits of development, the hard core poor are practically left out of it. The problem is not quite Malthusian, though the spectre of Malthus does raise its head every now and then when some region suffers from hunger, malnutrition and even famine. The impact of overpopulation is also felt in areas other than food production. And the diversity of India's population makes the problem of overpopulation all the more complex, as it is difficult to formulate a policy on demography in the circumstances.

One obvious economic implication of population growth is the growing need of foodgrains. While India has quite disproved the arguments in the international for a of the 1970s that the country could not be saved from large scale famines and resultant deaths, the problem of feeding the millions remains. Can India cope with the kind of figures projected by demographers? All available data suggest that the average Indian yields are among the lowest in the world. There are regions-the Indo-Gangetic plains, for example which could be made to yield millions of tonnes more of foodgrains than they do at present. The amount, according to experts, would easily meet the needs of the projected population levels. If technology and inputs improve, the potential could well increase. So, even if there are occasional food shortages due to erratic monsoons and so on, India's ability for feeding its population does not seem unrealisable. The very fact that agricultural demand and growth will inevitably increase draws attention to the next problem- that

of environmental degradation. Agricultural development on a large scale, with its attendant use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, water logging and other forms of soil degradation, is bound to create environmental problems. The pressure of population, especially in the Himalayan region, has led to destruction of forests. Devastating floods take their toll in the rich Gangetic plains and increasingly so.

There are other environmental problems created by overpopulation. The unplanned urbanisation with the concomitant lack of adequate civic infrastructure has already wreaked havoc in many of our cities and towns. Much of this growth has been in the form of slums and shanty towns harbouring ecological refugees and those squeezed off the land. The exploding cities could cause social tension and unrest, in turn affecting economic stability. Pollution from automobile emissions and industrial wastes has steadily, increased in the cities. Such environmental degradation, in its turn, adversely affects the people and causes health problems.

Poverty, it is said, is the greatest pollutant. It is marked by an apathy that erodes self-esteem and any willingness to live life to the fullest. It is also a major factor in the creation of a paradoxical situation: hunger and malnutrition amidst plentiful availability of food; the lack of purchasing power leading to starvation deaths. Poverty is accompanied by lack of health care and nutrition. And when these very basic needs are not met who cares about education, information and awareness?

The population of a country could easily be turned to advantage if it is highly skilled or trained so that it could be utilised in development. India can hardly boast of such a population. Given the monetary resources it has, it cannot quite meet the rendition of making its entire populace literate, leave wane highly skilled. Lack of resources, again, prevents good basic health facilities being provided to every person in the country. If the population were not so large, the resources could be made to meet the situation. The same holds true for other human needs such as housing.

Natural resources- especially water-are being depleted at an alarming rate because of increasing population. Most cities of India are facing acute water shortage; even underground water is being dangerously depleted. The likely population growth in India over the next several years will make it difficult to improve the quality of life of the people.

In the long run, even a large population, if educated properly and given the right skills, will only prove an asset to India. But in the short run, uncontrolled growth of population will have serious repercussions on the country’s economic development. It is a kind of vicious circle: with a large population, available resources are either too thinly spread to be of much use or they get concentrated and produce a skewed development; ‘trickle down’ of growth is a long and slow process, so improvement in the standard of living of the masses is excruciatingly slow; natural

resources are strained to an almost irreparable level; all this leads to discontent and social tensions; economic growth slows down, so does development, and the people suffer.

It is necessary that India consciously plans to give a heavier emphasis on social and economic development even as a policy for stabilising the population level is put in place. Only then can the population he turned into an economic asset. India is facing an intense crisis of resources. There is fierce competition for the nation's limited natural resources leading to quarrels between states, between communities and even families. Our land and water resources are being exploited to the hilt. The exploitation of mineral resources is threatening forests, nature reserves, and ecology. Seventy percent of the energy resources need to be imported putting constant pressure on us to export more or face currency devaluation. Over use of resources is contributing to natural disasters occurring more frequently and with greater devastation.

For many Indians, life is a big struggle just to put together the bare essentials for survival, and shortages of resources works most against the poor and underprivileged. Even as sections of India's middle-class struggle with scarcities, it is the poor and vulnerable sections of society who suffer most. It is well known that the biggest curse to the lives of millions of Indians is poverty. Though the rural poor have always been a deprived lot, their urban counterparts are not an inch better off. Having migrated to towns and cities in search of better life, they now survive under the most appalling of living conditions, with scant regard to the basics of cleanliness and hygiene. Awareness of healthy living habits is woefully lacking, so that, though the mortality rate has fallen over the years, epidemics and killer diseases continue to claim lives that could easily be saved. Infant mortality and deaths related to childbirth are still disturbingly common all over India, with large sections of the female population and a fair section of the male yet to receive their first lessons in literacy. With illiteracy rampant among the impoverished majority of the country, it is not difficult to understand why the rich easily exploit the poor, and corruption seems to have become a way of life. Indian life presents a classic example of being trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, from which there appears to be no escape. Nevertheless, a close inspection of the nature of these ills and inequalities reveals a single root cause lying at the core of the great entangled mass of our national life: viz. Population.

Population is the only non-depleting resource and a parameter of a country's development. In a country like India where the factors contributing to population growth far outweigh the factors for development, population is no longer a resource but a burden to society. India's population policy has been guided by the perception that a growing population is a serious impediment to development efforts. The pressing need of the day is to at create ideal conditions for acceptance of the need for stabilizing the population and how it is an essential element of human welfare and development. The solution to this lie in spreading of education and enlightenment, and in the

empowerment of women. Birth control programmes should also be integrated with medical and public health services to make them popular among the masses.